



MALAYSIA

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS



CANDIDATE
to the
UNITED NATIONS
SECURITY COUNCIL
for the term 2015-2016

(Please check against delivery)

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. AMBASSADOR HUSSEIN HANIFF
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF MALAYSIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**AT THE OPEN DEBATE OF THE
UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL
ON "CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT"**

NEW YORK, 8 SEPTEMBER 2014

Madam President,

At the outset, I wish to congratulate you on assuming the Presidency of the Security Council for this month. I also wish to express my delegation's appreciation to you for convening this open debate on "Children and Armed Conflict."

2. I also would like to take this opportunity to thank Ms. Leila Zerragoui, Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict; Mr. Hervé Ladsous, Under Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Yoka Brandt, Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF; Mr. Forest Whitaker, Special Envoy for Peace and Reconciliation of UNESCO; and Ms. Sandra Uwiringiyamana for their briefings to the Council this morning. I further wish to thank the Secretary General for his annual report on Children and armed conflict, contained in document S/2014/339, which provides a comprehensive overview of the impact of armed conflict on children in 2013 and guides our debate today. Malaysia associates itself with the statement delivered by Iran on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and Indonesia on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Madam President,

3. We are deeply concerned by the continuing grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict around the world as highlighted by the Secretary General in his report. Despite series of measures made by the international community to protect children in armed conflict, they continue to be recruited, killed, maimed, abducted, sexually exploited and deprived of humanitarian access and health care. Just over the recent months, the international community has been stunned by heartbreaking images of children suffering in the crossfire of conflicts beyond their control in many parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East and Africa.

4. Malaysia is particularly concerned over the high number of child casualties caused by the recent Israeli aggression and atrocities in Gaza, which claimed the lives of over 500 children. The horrific and brutal attacks also left more than 3,000 children injured and countless others orphaned. The fact that non-military UN facilities sheltering refugees, including schools and hospitals, were deliberately targeted during the conflict is deplorable and cannot be condoned. The sanctity of schools and hospitals in times of war must be safeguarded to ensure that communities in crisis continue to have access to education and healthcare. In this regard, we fully support the Secretary General's call, in line with applicable international humanitarian law and in accordance with the Security Council resolution 2143(2014) on Member States to consider adopting additional concrete measures to deter the military use of schools and other public places.

5. We also continue to be alarmed by the arrest and detention of children in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, many of whom are subjected to cruel and degrading ill-treatment by the Israeli security forces. The mistreatment and lack of adequate legal protection for Palestinian children in detention is unacceptable and must be urgently addressed.

Madam President,

6. Malaysia notes with deep concern the rise in attacks on and abductions of children by terrorist groups. We also condemn the continuous recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in many parts of the world. No child should be associated with parties to conflict. It is high time that Member States upheld their responsibility to protect children, particularly those trapped in conflict situations. Malaysia therefore warmly welcomes the campaign, "Children, Not Soldiers", launched by the UN Special Representative of Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF, aimed at ending the recruitment and use of children by Government armed forces in conflict by 2016. We recognize that this is an ambitious undertaking and we call on the Secretary General to ensure that the campaign is mainstreamed throughout the United Nation's work from peace processes to peace-building. We are confident that the road map and the comprehensive plan of action which have been incorporated into this campaign will yield many positive outcomes.

7. We are also deeply shocked by the appalling level of sexual and gender-based violence against children documented in the Secretary General's report. These acts are horrendous crimes for which those responsible must be brought to justice. They also have far reaching implications for the development of affected societies in general. We are concerned that impunity for grave violations against children, in particular sexual violence, is common to several situations and exacerbates even further the vulnerability of children. My delegation believes that there should be no leniency or amnesty on crimes perpetrated on innocent children and we continue to call on Member States to establish effective accountability measures to bring justice, dignity and rehabilitation for children victimized by armed conflict.

Madam President,

8. We fully concur with the Secretary General's recommendation for the Council to strengthen provisions for the protection of children in all relevant mandates of UN peacekeeping, special political and peace-building missions, which include the deployment of child protection advisers. Peacekeepers and frontline personnel in conflict situations should be adequately equipped to prevent and mitigate violations against children. Malaysia also supports efforts to mainstream the children and armed conflict agenda in the work of the Security Council, which ensures the continued high visibility of this subject matter.

Madam President,

9. Children are among the most vulnerable in any society as they are the easiest prey for ruthless perpetrators. At the same time, they are the key to the future of any society in the world. The violence inflicted upon children in armed conflict can leave physical and psychological scars that last for generations, affecting efforts to rebuild peaceful communities and nations. We therefore must put an end to acts by groups or individuals who systematically and deliberately target and abuse children in situations of armed conflict.

10. To conclude Madam President, Malaysia would like to express our continued commitment to work with Council members and international community to ensure that the protection of children in armed conflict around the world remains our priority.

I thank you Madam President.