



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF ARMENIA
TO THE OSCE

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STATEMENT

by the Delegation of Armenia
as delivered at the 95th Joint Meeting of the Forum for Security Co-operation and the
Permanent Council
Security Dialogue: Protection of children in armed conflicts

09 July 2025

Chairs,

The Delegation of Armenia would like to thank the OSCE Chairpersonship of Finland and the FSC Chairpersonship of Estonia for placing this pertinent topic for today's discussion. There is no doubt that children are among the most affected by armed conflicts, facing multidimensional risks and vulnerabilities including physical harm, psychological trauma, and forced displacement.

According to UNICEF, over 230 million children - nearly one in ten children globally - live in countries or areas affected by armed conflicts. 125 million of them are directly impacted by armed conflicts worldwide.

The recent annual report by the UN Secretary-General on the issue of children and armed conflict is a bitter reminder of the harsh reality of thousands of violations of children's rights in situations of armed conflict, including killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, starvation and denial of humanitarian access, which are among the most serious violations.

Under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, States have a binding obligation to take all measures to ensure the protection of children's fundamental rights, including the rights to life and health. It commits states to refrain from direct violations of the rights of children and to fulfill obligations to prevent harm, provide care and assistance, and avoid acts or omissions that may endanger children's safety and well-being.

Armenia emphasizes the critical importance of upholding these principles, including the goals and objectives enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international

instruments, which are key to promote and protect the rights of children, particularly those residing in conflict zones.

The profound impact of armed conflict on children is also evident in global displacement records. According to the UNHCR's Refugee Population Statistics Database an estimated 40 per cent of around 122 million displaced people are children below 18 years of age. This staggering figure underscores the urgent need for comprehensive protection measures that address both the immediate and long-term needs of children affected by crises.

Armenia is deeply familiar with the tragic consequences of war on children. In the most recent crisis of autumn 2023, 115,000 Armenians were displaced, including 30,000 children, many of whom had already experienced multiple displacements and were subjected to months long blockade and starvation. Forced to flee their homes in a matter of hours, these children endured trauma, uncertainty, and profound loss. This dire situation was duly documented among others by the International Committee of the Red Cross and UNHCR.

In response, the Government of Armenia launched urgent humanitarian initiatives prioritizing healthcare, education, and psychosocial support for displaced children. These efforts form part of a broader national strategy to address the multifaceted humanitarian needs of displaced families, with child protection and well-being at its core.

Chairs,

Protecting children in armed conflict is not only a moral imperative, it is essential for breaking cycles of violence and laying the groundwork for lasting peace. Furthermore, supporting national, regional, and international efforts, as well as advocating for the rights of children affected by wars, remains an essential leverage to curb this scourge. Armenia strongly advocates for peace in our region and makes most meaningful and tangible efforts to this end. In the face of the atrocities of war and conflicts, we must work tirelessly to ensure that every child can live with dignity in peace and security.

In this context, we underscore the vital role of the OSCE in preventing and responding to these challenges through comprehensive and sustained efforts to ensure that children are protected, empowered, and given the chance to grow up in dignity and peace. The OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security provides an important basis and guidance in this regard.

To fulfill this mandate effectively, it is imperative to maintain the OSCE's meaningful presence in conflict-affected regions. Continued engagement is crucial not only for preserving the organization's credibility and purpose but also for ensuring that it delivers on its mission to promote security, safeguard human rights, and strengthen stability across the OSCE area, in a comprehensive and indivisible manner.

Thank you.