



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

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National statement delivered by

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**UNGA 78
THIRD COMMITTEE
Item 67: Rights of Children
Interactive dialogue with SRSB Children and Armed
Conflict**

New York, 5th October 2023

Special Representative,

Thank you for your latest report, which once again contains sobering data about grave violations against children. It was particularly appalling to read that attacks on schools and hospitals increased by 112% in 2022 compared to the previous year – not least as a result of Russia's unprovoked war of aggression against Ukraine. Belgium repeats its call upon all States to protect education from attacks, in line with Security Council resolution 2601, and to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.

We welcome the specific focus in your report on the vulnerabilities of the millions of children displaced because of conflict. Belgium shares your deep concern about the wide range of human rights violations and abuses, including sexual violence, that displaced children have to endure – on top of the already challenging ordeal of being forced to flee from their homes.

We urge all States to respect and ensure the rights of displaced children, and to give them the special protection they are entitled to under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

We call on those States who have not done so yet to ratify and implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its two optional protocols – the one on the involvement of children in armed conflict; and the one on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography, which is particularly relevant in this context.

Special Representative,

The studies which are referred to in your report are an important contribution to increase our understanding of the challenges and vulnerabilities of displaced children because of conflict. What other concrete measures could you and your office take to better protect these children and prevent grave violations against them?

Thank you.