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Committee: CCPCJ

Issue: Question of child soldiers in terrorist organizations

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INTRODUCTION

- Child soldiers are often recruited or abducted by terrorist organizations to serve various roles, from combatants to spies, messengers, and logistical support. These groups exploit the vulnerability and malleability of children, using threats, coercion, and ideological indoctrination to compel them into service. Some of the most notorious groups that have employed child soldiers include
- The use of child soldiers by terrorist organizations is a serious humanitarian and human rights issue that affects multiple regions globally, particularly in conflict-ridden and unstable areas. Child soldiers are defined as children under the age of 18 who are recruited by armed groups, including terrorist organizations, to participate in various activities such as fighting, intelligence gathering, or as human shields.

Background Information

- The use of child soldiers by terrorist organizations has a long and troubling history, rooted in the complexities of modern conflict, political instability, and poverty. These groups exploit vulnerable children, who may be displaced by war, separated from their families, or living in dire economic conditions, by offering them what appears to be protection, purpose, or even survival.
- Historically, the recruitment of child soldiers is not new and has been seen in conflicts throughout history. However, the modern phenomenon, particularly within terrorist organizations, has garnered significant attention due to its widespread impact on global security, humanitarian law, and human rights.
- Many children recruited by terrorist organizations come from impoverished or war-torn regions where they have little access to education, employment, or stable family structures. Terrorist groups often promise food, shelter, and protection, creating a distorted sense of security for vulnerable children. Making poverty one of the root causes for the child terrorist organisations

Background Information

- These organizations manipulate religious, ethnic, or political ideologies to brainwash children into accepting violence. ISIS, for example, used schools and camps to indoctrinate children in their version of jihad and the concept of martyrdom, creating loyalty to their cause from an early age. This is known as ideological indoctrination.
- Some groups are:
 - **Boko Haram (Nigeria):** They use child soldiers in combat, suicide bombings, and other brutal roles.
 - **ISIS (Islamic State):** Known for its "Cubs of the Caliphate" program, which indoctrinated children with extremist ideology and trained them for combat.
 - **Al-Shabaab (Somalia):** Frequently recruits children, sometimes forcibly, for its insurgency operations.
 - **LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) (Uganda):** Known for kidnapping children to use them as soldiers and slaves.

Relevant Treaties or Past Solutions

- 1. The Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (2000), under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, prohibits the conscription of children under 18 for participation in hostilities.**
- 2. The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998) defines the conscription of children under 15 as a war crime.**
- 3. The United Nations Security Council has passed numerous resolutions (such as Resolution 1612) condemning the recruitment of child soldiers and calling for sanctions against groups that continue the practice.**

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- **Livelihood Programs for Families**

Alleviating poverty through social safety nets, job creation, and income-generating activities can reduce the economic pressures that push children into the hands of terrorist groups.

- **Community Watch and Alert Systems**

Establishing local systems for tracking and alerting authorities about potential child recruitment can help stop abductions and forced conscription.

- **Strengthening National Legislation**

Governments must ensure that their national laws reflect international standards, explicitly criminalizing the recruitment and use of child soldiers and imposing severe penalties for those responsible.

APPENDICE

- I. <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/>
 - *This is the official UN link related to children armed conflict and provides more information about past treaties that can be included in the resolutions*

- 2. https://www.qil-qdi.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/02_Child-Soldiers_JORGENSEN_FI_N-.pdf
 - *This PDF provides citations and treaties/laws related to the problem.*