
Module 1:

CHILDREN IN PEACEKEEPING CONTEXTS

OVERVIEW

This module aims at introducing learners to the concept of a child and to raise their awareness of the impact of armed conflict on children. The module also introduces the types of violations against children that UN Police Officers will encounter in their mission areas.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Be able to explain who is a child and why children are most at risk during armed conflict and in post-conflict situations.
- Be able to describe the impact of conflict on children, including the six grave violations and other forms of violence / abuses against children.
- Be aware of gender concerns and vulnerabilities of boys and girls during armed conflict.

ACTIVITIES

- PowerPoint presentation
- Group Work on case studies
- Debriefing
- Quiz

LEARNING HANDOUTS

- Case Study 1
- Case Study 2
- Case Study 3

FACILITATION TIME

90 minutes

TRAINER'S NOTES

SLIDE 1: Learning Outcomes

 This module will focus on situations faced by children in conflict and post-conflict contexts. The objective of the module is for you to become familiar with common situations you will encounter in your work as UN Police Officers in your mission area. The module will define who is a child, address children's special vulnerabilities and explain the various types of violations of children's rights in conflict and post-conflict contexts. The roles and responsibilities of UN Police Officers in relation to these violations will be explored in the following modules.

 Slides 2 to 14 define who is a child, the vulnerability of children during armed conflict and the concept of child protection.

SLIDE 2: Who is a Child?

 Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slides.

 Who is a child?

SLIDE 3: Who is a Child?

 According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, a child is every human being under eighteen years of age.

 **While, for UN personnel, every person under 18 years of age is a child,** the definition in the Convention allows for cultural and legal differences in some countries where for example children attain adulthood before 18 years of age, either by starting active employment or by being able to drive. The legal age for employment and vote will also vary depending on the local legislation. However, UN personnel must adhere to international norms and consider all persons below 18 years as children, in all circumstances.

SLIDE 4: Who is a Child?

 If you have to interact with a child it is important to pay attention to the level of development and maturity of each child, which is unique to him or her, and this may influence the way questions will be asked during interviews, or how explanations are provided about what happened, etc.

SLIDE 5: Aspects of the child's development



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slides.



What are the different aspects of the child's development?

SLIDE 6: Aspects of the child's development



Children develop at different rates and in different times in the physical, mental, emotional and social aspects. A 14-year-old girl could look mature physically; however, her mental, emotional and social development is still in the formative stage and is not complete. If the child has not received the proper level of input and has been raised in an environment that lacks respect or meeting his/her needs, this will affect his/her development negatively.

SLIDE 7: Aspects of the child's development



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers below.



What is needed for a child to attain his or her full development?

- ❖ Proper nutrition (health)
- ❖ Protection from violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect (at all four levels, that is physical, mental, emotional and social)
- ❖ Stimulation (emotional and mental development, social engagement, education, identity, self-care skills)
- ❖ Playing (social engagement, health, emotional development, identity)
- ❖ Supporting family (emotional development, social engagement, education, identity, self-care skills, family and relations)
- ❖ Love (self-care skills, emotional development, social engagement, family and relations)
- ❖ Protection from assault and emotional neglect (self-care skills, emotional development, social engagement, family and relations)
- ❖ Positive examples to follow (family and relations, identity, and self-care)
- ❖ Educational discipline in a loving context (self-care skills, emotional development, social engagement, family and relations)

SLIDE 8: Aspects of the child's development

Children rely on adults and on the external environment in their development process. The way that adults and their society treat them plays a great role in influencing their behavior. Police officers must

understand this issue when they deal with children in the context of their work. The responsibility of protecting the child from any form of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation lays on the shoulders of the police. It is a duty for the police to have a positive influence on the lives of children.

SLIDE 9: Why are children more vulnerable than adults?



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slide.



Why are children more vulnerable than adults?

SLIDE 10: Why are children more vulnerable than adults?



Children are still in the process of growing up. This means that their physical, moral and intellectual development is not yet completed. Factors that negatively impact a child's development, such as lack of proper nutrition and health care, interrupted education and trauma due to the experience of violence can have a long-lasting impact on that child's life. Violence resulting from armed conflict can pose a risk to children's development.



Children can be more easily influenced and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions. They are thus more easily manipulated into committing acts that have grave consequences, such as fighting with an armed group for promised monetary rewards. For example, they may be lured into joining an armed force or group thinking they will gain employment or protection from violence.



Children depend on their family, community and government structures for protection and care. Often, these structures are damaged or destroyed during armed conflict. This leaves children without support. Children do not have the same means as adults to cope with difficult situations.

SLIDE 11: Categories of children in contact with the law



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slide.

What are the different categories of children that can be in contact with the law?

SLIDE 12: Categories of children in contact with the law



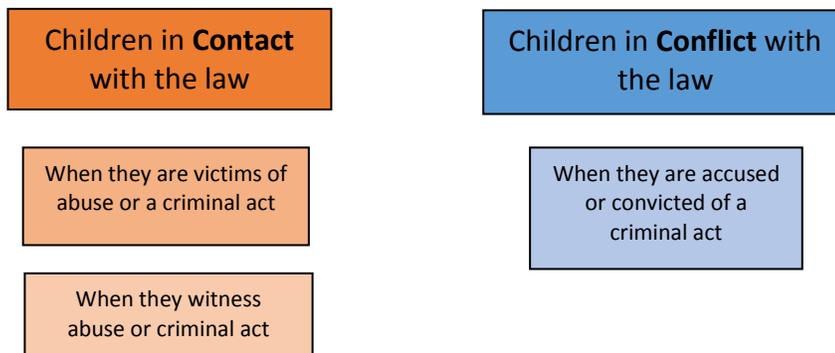
In times of armed conflict, as well as in times of peace, children may come in contact with the law. They will do so in four categories of situations:

1. When they are child victims of abuse or a criminal act

2. When they are child witnesses of abuse or a criminal act
3. When they are accused or convicted of a criminal act
4. A child can belong to all three categories at the same time

 It is important to specify that even though children associated with armed groups or armed forces could have committed violent crimes during their association, they should be primarily seen as victims of a criminal act as, according to international law, enlistment of children is considered a war crime.

 The expression “children in *conflict* with the law” designates children that are suspected, accused or convicted of an offense or a crime. The broader expression “children in *contact* with the law” designates all children who come in contact with law enforcement agencies and the judicial system, whether as offenders, witnesses or victims.



 In any context, but more so in times of armed conflict, it might be difficult to distinguish between these categories and children in contact with the law will for example both be victims and offenders. We will use a case study later in this module to discuss this issue further.

SLIDE 13: Child Protection

 Ask the following question in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slide.

 What is child protection?

SLIDE 14: Child Protection

 **Child Protection** is defined as the prevention of and response to all forms of violence against children.

Child protection concerns all children without distinction. This means that each child deserves protection, regardless of his or her age, origins, ethnic group, geographical situation, gender, religion or any other consideration.



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers below.



1. What kind of conflicts are we witnessing in the world today?
2. What makes these conflicts different from inter-state conflicts fought by regular national armies?

SUGGESTED ANSWERS:

1. What kind of conflicts are we witnessing in the world today?

- ❖ Conflicts within a country
- ❖ Regional conflicts
- ❖ Ethnic or religious violence within a country
- ❖ Local and international terrorism

2. What makes these conflicts different from inter-state conflicts fought by regular national armies?

- ❖ Violence targeted at civilian populations, including children, by armed groups and governments
- ❖ Proliferation of weapons (in particular small arms and light weapons)
- ❖ Recruitment of children by armed forces and groups
- ❖ Sexual violence used as a weapon of war by armed groups
- ❖ Ethnic violence directed at a population group, for example by a government, and genocide



Slide 15 provides explanations of the six grave violations. You can explain and define the different violations briefly and then encourage discussions on each one to test basic understanding as these will be described in detail in module 5. Slide 16 provides examples of other types of violations of children's rights in armed conflict and post-conflict contexts and slide 17 provides examples of other violations. Slide 17 provides some gender considerations.

SLIDE 15: Six Grave Violations



The six grave violations against children during armed conflict were selected due to the severe consequences they have on the lives of children, and the possibility to measure and quantify them. In 2005, the Security Council established a Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to systematically monitor, document and report on the six grave violations, which are serious breaches of international law. The legal basis for action will be explained in module 2. As UN Police Officers, you will be expected to

contribute to the reporting on the six grave violations in your mission area. The MRM will be explained in more details in module 5.



In 2005, the UN Security Council has defined six grave violations against children in times of armed conflict.¹ These violations are:

1. **Killing and maiming of children:** refers to any action that results in the killing or permanent injury (maiming) of one or more children. These can be by deliberate actions of armed groups, in crossfire or through accidents caused by unexploded ordinances, landmines or suicide bombs.
2. **Recruitment or use of children:** refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or has been, forcibly, compulsorily or voluntarily recruited or used by an armed force or group in any capacity. This includes taking part in active combat, being used for reconnaissance missions, to cook, to serve as a porter, for sexual purposes, to support the force or group through other tasks, etc.
3. **Sexual violence against children:** includes any forced act of a sexual nature imposed on a child, including rape, sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced pregnancy, forced abortion, etc. This violation is committed against boys and girls, but girls are more vulnerable in times of armed conflict.
4. **Attacks against schools or hospitals:**
 - Any physical attack or threat of attack on buildings, either targeted or indiscriminate
 - Attack or threat of attack against school children
 - Attack or threat of attack against medical and education personnel
 - Looting and wanton destruction of buildings
 - Military use of school and hospital buildings
5. **Abduction of children:** refers to any removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child, either temporarily or permanently. In many cases, the abduction of children is the precursor to other grave violations. Children can be abducted to be killed or maimed, to become victims of sexual violence or to be recruited in the ranks of an armed force or group
6. **Denial of humanitarian access for children:** includes blocking free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need, including children. These acts include attacks committed against humanitarian workers, the looting of humanitarian aid and the denial of access for service delivery. Armed groups and governments will sometimes block access to humanitarian agencies, including the UN, to parts of the territory. This is often used to deny humanitarian aid to certain parts of the population, for example a specific ethnic group or a region that is perceived as supporting one side to the conflict.



In the past, most conflicts were wars between countries fought by regular national armies. Today, the vast majority of armed conflicts are not between two states; they are intra-states rather than inter-state.

SLIDE 16: Other violations of children's rights during armed conflict and in post-conflict contexts

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1539 of 22 April 2004,
<http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/un-documents/document/CAC%20SRES%201539.php>

 Apart from the six grave violations, children in conflict zones are subjected to other types of serious violations. Those include:

- Exploitation, forced labor and trafficking
- Arbitrary and prolonged detention
- Torture and ill treatment
- Displacement and separation from caretakers
- Denial of education and other life opportunities

In times of conflict, law and order break down and space is created for criminal organizations to increase their activities.

 It is important to make learners understand that these violations are often committed together. A child will then often be a victim of two or more of these violations. For example, he or she might have been forcibly recruited by an armed group and tortured or raped by that group.

SLIDE 17: Other violations against children in detention

 UN Police will encounter other violations of children's rights in mission areas that are not related to armed conflict, such as:

- Mistreatment of children by national security forces (police, military and paramilitary), including beatings and sexual abuse
- Arbitrary and prolonged detention of children
- Denial of legal counsel and due process for child perpetrators
- Denial of access to justice for child victims
- Discrimination based on gender, ethnic origin, religion or nationality
- Lack of separate detention facilities for children, and for boys and girls, and other special procedures for children based on international standards
- Etc.

Often, these violations can be exacerbated in post-conflict contexts, as for example the national justice system could have been partially destroyed by conflict.

SLIDE 18: Gender Considerations

 It is important to understand that violations of children's rights will affect boys and girls differently. Some forms of violence have different manifestations and impact according to the gender of the child. In situations of armed conflict, girls are especially vulnerable as they are targeted for sexual violence more than boys. In addition, in many societies girls or boys who have been raped face stigma and discrimination in their families and communities; this has a strong negative impact on the reintegration of girls associated with armed forces or groups into their communities, as they have often been victims of rape and in most cases of sexual abuse.

 Boys are also vulnerable as they are targeted to be used as combatants more than girls, due to their perceived superior physical strength which increases the risk of being maimed or killed. Furthermore, this has a strong negative impact on their reintegration into their communities as they have often been forced to kill and commit other violent crimes against civilians.

 Even though we can statistically see a pattern in the violations affecting boys and girls differently, it is important to understand that girls are also used as combatants and that boys are also victims of sexual exploitation.

Slides 19 and 20: Child Protection and UN Police

 All components of a UN peacekeeping mission have a role to play in child protection. UN Police have a crucial role to play, as they:

- are deployed to conflict and post-conflict areas where violations of children’s rights are prevalent;
- mentor and train host state police; contribute to the establishment of the rule of law and security sector reforms;
- interact with the civilian population, including children, and have a mandate to protect;
- have a duty to report violations of children’s rights.

“Protecting children from the effects of armed conflict is a moral imperative, a legal responsibility and a question of international peace and security.”²



Group work on case studies

Time required: 45 minutes

5 minutes	For introduction of activity and instructions
20 minutes	For group work
20 minutes	For group presentation and discussion

 We will now look at three case studies that illustrate some of the situations discussed in this module.

 Divide the learners into three groups. Each group will have 20 minutes to read the case study it has been assigned and answer the questions.

² “The Six Grave Violations Against Children During Armed Conflict: The Legal Foundation”, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children in Armed Conflict, November 2013

 The objective of the case studies is not to determine what police action is required; this will be explored in following modules. Rather, the case studies aim at raising learners' awareness of the situation of children in conflict zones.

 Some participants could be sensitive to the story described in the different case studies. It is your role to be observant and monitor participants' reaction.

 Distribute one case study to each group.

Case Study 1

Osman is a 15-year-old teenager from West Darfur. Until recently he was attending a high school and he hoped to graduate next year. He wanted to become a doctor. His father had started raising money to send him to university.

Then, two months ago, there was a raid by a militia in his town and the school was attacked. All students and teachers had to flee and Osman's teacher was killed while trying to protect his students. Osman saw his teacher get killed.

The militia used the school for a few days as a base and then left for another town. Parts of the school have been damaged and there is only one teacher left, not enough for all the students.

Since the attack, Osman has been withdrawn and he has lost appetite. He says he doesn't want to go back to school because there could be another attack. His teacher, whom he admired, is dead. Osman now says he doesn't want to become a doctor anymore and prefers to stay at home and help his father with cattle herding.

Questions:

1. What have been the consequences of the school attack on Osman?
2. What is likely to be the impact of the school attack on the town's community?

Case Study 2

Jacques was recruited by the Mayi-Mayi in the Democratic Republic of Congo when he was 10 years old. This is his testimony:

“I remember the day I decided to join the Mayi-Mayi. It was after an attack on my village. My parents, and also my grandfather, were killed and I was running. I was so scared. I lost everyone. I had nowhere to go and no food to eat. In the Mayi-Mayi I thought I would be protected, but it was hard. I could see others die in front of me. I was hungry very often and I was scared. Sometimes they would whip me, sometimes very hard. They used to say that it would make me a better fighter. One day, they whipped my 11-year-old friend to death because he had not killed the enemy. Also, what I did not like was to hear the girls, our friends, crying because the soldiers would rape them.”

Testimony from “Democratic Republic of Congo: Children at War, Creating Hope for the Future”, Amnesty International, 2006

Questions:

1. Is Jacques a victim, a witness or a perpetrator? Explain your answer.
2. Did Jacques join the Mayi-Mayi voluntarily or was he forced to do it? Explain your answer.

Case Study 3

During a patrol in the camp for internally displaced persons near Batangafo in the Central African Republic, you and your colleague from the national police encounter a group of civilians who come to you and complain that there are some immoral activities going on in the camp at night. You ask them a few questions and understand that they are talking about young girls who engage in prostitution. While discussing with the group you realise that some of the girls are probably children and you decide to take some action.

You and your colleague return to the camp in the evening and notice a group of girls standing together in a dark corner. You approach the girls and engage them in conversation. One of them accepts to discuss with you. She tells you that she is 13 years old and a Muslim. Her village was attacked by anti-balaka militias last year and she had to run away with her family. The attack happened at night and while they were all running the situation became very confused and she lost her parents.

She continued walking with some people she didn't know from her village. They reached the camp after 3 days and were admitted. She doesn't know anyone in the camp and nobody is helping her. She wants to go back to her village to find her parents but she doesn't have any money.

A few months ago, she met this group of girls who are all older than her. They introduced her to prostitution as a way to earn small amounts of money and food from men living in the villages neighbouring the camp. She has been doing it for two months now but she tells you she doesn't like it. She hopes to leave the camp as soon as she raises some money.

Questions:

1. How has the conflict affected this young girl?
2. Can you describe why children are more vulnerable than adults during armed conflict with examples extracted from this case study?



After 20 minutes, ask the learners to come back in plenary. Each group designates one presenter who will read the case study aloud and summarize the group's answers to each question. After each presentation, ask other learners to comment on the answers of the group presenting.



Use the possible answers below to complement the discussion after each presentation.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

Case Study 1:

1. What have been the consequences of the school attack on Osman?
 - Osman is distressed from the attack and especially from witnessing his teacher's killing. Osman is more withdrawn and sad, and he has lost appetite.
 - Osman has lost time in his education and may never graduate.
 - Osman has lost his dream of becoming a doctor.
2. What is likely to be the impact of the school attack on the town's community?
 - Other children will stop attending school and stop their education. The community will suffer from a lack of education of that generation.
 - Other children may be distressed like Osman.

Case Study 2:

1. Is Jacques a victim, a witness or a perpetrator? Explain your answer.
 - Jacques is a victim, a witness and a perpetrator all at once.
 - He is first and foremost a victim, as he has lost his family, was forced to flee and left to care for himself.

- He is a witness because he has seen many violations being committed during his time with the Mayi-Mayi, for example the rape of girls and the killing of his friend.
- He is also a perpetrator because he fought with the Mayi-Mayi and might have killed civilians.

2. Did Jacques join the Mayi-Mayi voluntarily or was he forced to do it?

- Jacques was forced by circumstances to join the Mayi-Mayi group: Jacques is now an orphan as his family was killed; his village might have been destroyed, so he has no place to go back to.
- He joined the armed group pushed only by a survival instinct, not by choice. He was mistreated by the Mayi-Mayi and forced to fight.

Case Study 3:

1. How has the conflict affected this young girl?

- She has lost her family and has been displaced.
- She has already lost more than a year of education.
- She is prostituting herself out of necessity.
- She is likely traumatized by the attack on her village and the loss of her family.

2. Can you describe why children are more vulnerable than adults during armed conflict with examples extracted from this case study?

- At 13 years old she is still in the process of growing up. Her physical, moral and intellectual development is at risk through the lack of proper food, education and support as well as through sexual exploitation and physical violence.
- Children are more easily influenced, and she may not understand clearly the consequences of her actions, such as risk of pregnancy, physical violence or stigmatization from other members of the community.
- As shown in this case study the conflict has impacted the protection system of this young girl, she has lost her family, members of her community and it seems that there is no support system for children in this camp.

SLIDE 21: Questions



Ask learners if they have questions on the content of this module. It is important to allow sufficient time to answer all questions.



Distribute the end-of-module quiz to learners and give them 10 minutes to answer the questions. Then distribute the answers for auto-correction. Ask learners to work in pairs and correct each other's answers.

SLIDE 22/23: Key Messages



The key messages slides summarise the important take away that connect with the objectives of the module as described at the beginning of the session. Ask learners what the key messages are before showing the slide with the possible answers. It will help them synthesise and integrate the key concepts taught throughout the module and it will help you in assessing the learning and concentrate on gaps or inaccuracies.



Ask the following questions in plenary. Encourage learners to discuss. Then, complete the discussion with the suggested answers presented in the next slides.



What are the key messages of this module?

The key messages are:

1. The definition of a child: anyone under the age of 18.
2. The development of the child is a key consideration when protecting children – each child is different.
3. Children in contact with the law include victims, witnesses and perpetrators. Often children belong to more than one category at the same time.
4. Armed conflict and emergencies increase vulnerabilities and justify additional protective measures for children.
5. Many forms of violations of children's rights exist during armed conflict, including the six grave violations.
6. Boys and girls experience conflict differently, some violations of children's rights have a different impact according to the gender of the child.