Lesson 1.1

The Lesson

Starting Module 1: Conceptual Framework and Lesson 1.1

OVERVIEW
By the end of the three modules of this training course on child protection, learners should be able to:

identify violations, understand the framework, take appropriate action

Module 1 looks at the child protection conceptual framework in United Nations peace operations. Lesson 1.1 will focus on the specific impact of armed conflict on children, the reasons why conflicts disproportionately affect children, and the violations and threats against children that peacekeepers are likely to encounter in mission areas. Learners will also learn to identify the six grave violations against children.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
• Define "child" and explain why children are most at risk during armed conflict;
• Describe the relationship between children and armed conflict, and protection of civilians;
• Summarize the changing nature of conflict and its impact on children;
• Describe the six grave violations against children;
• Explain gender concerns and the vulnerabilities that boys and girls face.

ACTIVITIES
1. Film: A Child’s Fate, and discussion
2. Case Study: Testimonies from a boy and a girl

HANDOUTS (FOR LEARNERS)
1. Six Grave Violations against Children
2. Case Study on Gender: Testimonies from a Boy and a Girl
Welcome to the training on Child Protection for United Nations Military Peacekeepers. Over the following days, you will learn about the child protection mandate and what it means for you in your daily operations as a military Child Protection Focal Point.

Child protection is defined as the prevention of and response to abuse, neglect, exploitation and violence against children. You, as peacekeepers, have a specific role to play in child protection, and you must know how to engage with children when you encounter them in the course of your operations.

The training is structured around the following three modules and nine lessons:

**Module 1: Conceptual Framework**
- Lesson 1.1: Children in Armed Conflict
- Lesson 1.2: Roles and Responsibilities of Mission Components and External Partners
Module 2: Legal Framework
- Lesson 2.1: Legal Framework
- Lesson 2.2: Child Protection Framework

Module 3: Operational Framework
- Lesson 3.1: Interacting with Children
- Lesson 3.2: Military Component Child Protection Roles and Tasks
- Lesson 3.3: Military Component Child Protection Action and Response
- Lesson 3.4: Force Headquarters Child Protection Focal Point
- Lesson 3.5: Military Child Protection Focal Points in Sectors, Units and Team Sites

SLIDE 2: MODULE 1, LESSON 1: CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

This lesson will focus on the specific impact of armed conflict on children. You will learn why conflict disproportionately affects children, and become familiar with the common violations and threats that you, as peacekeepers, are likely to encounter in your mission areas. You may encounter children used as child soldiers, raped, torn from their families or maimed. A firm understanding of the impact of conflict on children will help you to be more alert to the protection needs of, and threats and violations against, children in armed conflict.
Learning Objectives

- **Define** “child” and **explain** why children are most at risk during armed conflict;
- **Describe** the relationship between children and armed conflict, and protection of civilians;
- **Summarize** the changing nature of conflict and its impact on children;
- **Describe** the six “grave violations”;
- **Explain** gender concerns and the vulnerabilities that boys and girls face.

**Key Message:** Upon completion of this lesson, learners will have a better understanding of the critical importance of child protection in peacekeeping operations today.

Lesson 1.1 comprises five learning objectives. By the end of the lesson, learners will:
- Understand who is a child (*Convention on the Rights of the Child*, art. 1);
- Understand what makes children especially vulnerable during conflict, and their unique protection needs;
- Examine the changing nature of conflict and the impact that current conflict situations have on children;
- Identify the six grave violations against children, as defined by the Security Council, and discuss their role as peacekeepers in addressing and reporting those violations; and
- Consider the similarities and differences among concerns relating to girls and boys in times of armed conflict.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message**: In peacekeeping operations, every person under 18 years old should be treated as a child.

- Article 1 of the *Convention on the Rights of the Child* states:

  “A child means every human being below the age of 18 years, unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.”

The simplified and common understanding of that definition is that a child is a person below the age of 18. For United Nations peacekeepers, a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

In some cultures, and according to the laws of some host States in which we are deployed, a child enters adulthood once he/she gets married, becomes a parent or earns his/her own income. Maturity is defined by the social role a person assumes, rather than by age. However, peacekeepers must adhere to the internationally accepted definition of a child, as stated above. When in doubt, apply the highest standard of protection, and assume that the person is a child.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: This film was made to support this training course. Children are particularly vulnerable to grave violations and threats during armed conflict and peacekeepers have a responsibility to protect them.

The film, A Child’s Fate, is intended to engage learners in a discussion on child protection. Learners will understand the gravity of the situation faced by children in conflict zones around the world; and that they, as peacekeepers, play a vital role in protecting children. The film will also bring peacekeepers to consider the protection needs of children in conflict situations.

You are about to watch a 12-minute film developed by DPO and entitled “A Child’s Fate”. It depicts the horrors that children are exposed to in conflict. It issues a call to action and explains why peacekeepers must take action. The film also shows how every mission component has a role to play in child protection. Finally, it introduces the child protection specialists deployed in peacekeeping missions.

As you watch the film, reflect on the following questions, which we will discuss subsequently:

- What threats do children face during armed conflict?
- Why are children more at risk than adults during armed conflict?

Show the film, A Child’s Fate (https://youtu.be/gNFnRlGPzSM).

SLIDE 6: CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Group Discussion**
Ask the questions on the slide and facilitate discussion among the learners.

**POSSIBLE RESPONSES**

1. **Children can be more easily influenced and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions.**
   For example, children may be lured into joining an armed force or armed group, thinking they will be obtaining "employment" or protection from violence. Children have also been used as "suicide bombers," carrying explosives hidden in their bags or clothing, without knowing it.

2. **Children depend on family, community and government structures for protection and care.**
   Those structures are generally destroyed or have collapsed during conflict. That is why displaced or unaccompanied children are at greater risk of exploitation or abuse during conflict.

3. **Children are still growing/in the process of development.**
Violence from armed conflict poses several risks to the healthy development of children. For example, denial of access to basic services, including adequate nutrition, has a more serious long-term effect on children, particularly babies and younger children, than on adults. Traumatic and other negative experiences and influences during conflict (such as indoctrination) carry more consequences for children than adults.

SLIDE 7: THE NATURE OF ARMED CONFLICT IS CHANGING

The Nature of Armed Conflict is Changing

- Internal armed conflict
- Regional conflict
- Ethnic and sectarian violence
- Number of armed groups has increased
- Proliferation of weapons
- Rape and violence as tools of war
- Civilians are targeted
- Civilian and child casualties

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Today’s conflicts disproportionately impact children.

- Let us explore some of the characteristics and trends that define armed conflict today:
  - There are few international conflicts these days; most conflicts today are internal conflicts – independence struggles, separation struggles, ethnic and/or religious struggles, civil war within the borders of one country;
  - Such conflicts often spill over into other countries – causing waves of refugees or internally displaced persons or the spread of armed groups – and, in turn, affect the entire immediate region;
  - One key dynamic of conflict that impacts children today is the deliberate action on the part of armed groups to achieve a strategic advantage – using grave
measures, such as launching attacks on villages and raping civilians and children. In addition, the frequency with which children are abducted and/or recruited for use as child soldiers is alarming:

- War takes place in and around villages; schools and hospitals serve as easy targets, making civilians and children especially vulnerable.

SLIDE 8: THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

**Key Message:** The consequences and impact of conflict on children can be placed into two categories of concern: peace and security; and humanitarian and development.

Let us look more closely at the impact of war and conflict on children. The consequences of conflict on children can be divided into two categories of concern:
- Peace and security
- Humanitarian and development

Peace and security impacts include physical threats, exploitation and abuse. Examples of such impacts are the killing of children in shelling and crossfire situations, injury to children by landmine and explosive remnants of war, rape of and sexual violence against children, detention and torture of children, and acts that constitute war crimes and crimes against humanity. United Nations peace operations play a key role in addressing the peace and security concerns of children.
Humanitarian and development impacts may involve food distribution, water points, refugee camps for shelter, temporary schools, medical facilities, among others. Those matters are normally addressed by international or local humanitarian and development agencies. Cooperative work and effort from all relevant actors are needed in order to fully respond to the devastating effects of conflict on the lives of children. That will be explored in more detail in lesson 1.2 and module 3.

SLIDE 9: THE SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN

The Six GRAVE Violations Against Children

- Killing and maiming
- Recruitment and use
- Rape and other sexual violence
- Abduction
- Attacks on schools or hospitals
- Denial of humanitarian access

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: These six (categories of) grave violations against children are considered the most atrocious. All peacekeepers must know of and be able to recognize these violations.

The six grave violations against children during armed conflict were pinpointed owing to their nefarious nature and severe consequences on the lives of children, and the fact that they can be monitored and quantified.

The six grave violations against children in armed conflict are indeed heinous breaches of international law (the legal basis for asserting action in response to such breaches will be covered in module 2.) Reports on these grave violations are
submitted to the Security Council and the alleged perpetrators can be brought to justice and sanctioned.

Peacekeepers are expected to report and act on these violations. You, as peacekeepers, must therefore be fully aware of them and be able to recognize them appropriately.

SLIDE 10: DEALING WITH THE SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS

Dealing with the Six Grave Violations

- Security Council resolution 1612 (2005)
- The grave violations are against international law
- Reports of violations are sent to the Security Council
- United Nations peacekeepers contribute to reporting on these violations

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Key Message: The six grave violations identified by the Security Council require specific attention by peacekeepers.
After broad consultations within the United Nations, the Security Council identified six categories of acts that warrant priority attention. When conducted by armed forces or armed groups in a conflict, these acts constitute grave violations. Peacekeepers must be aware of and be able to recognize these grave violations. Let us examine each one of them in detail.

**SLIDE 11: KILLING AND MAIMING**

**Killing and Maiming**

*Any action that results in the death of or serious injury to one or more children, including.*

- Shelling
- Crossfire
- Cluster munitions
- Landmines
- Unexploded ordnances (UXOs)
- Suicide bombs

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** Killing and maiming are acts that result in the death of or serious injury to a child or children.

Killing and maiming are acts that result in the death of or serious injury to a child or children, including scarring, disfigurement or mutilation.

Although often intentional, maiming can also result from wounds caused by bullets in a crossfire or detonation of landmines. In warfare today, hundreds of thousands of children are often killed and injured during military operations from crossfire, aerial bombardment and shelling. One worrying trend is the increase in suicide attacks and the use of children to carry them out, which has led to the death of or serious injury to several children.

Some 10,000 people are killed or injured by unexploded ordnances (UXOs) annually; and more than 40 per cent of the casualties are children.
Examples
1. Sometimes children are maimed deliberately. Between 1999 and 2002, during the civil war in Sierra Leone, the rebels instituted a policy of cutting off the hands, legs and arms of captured soldiers and civilians, including children. The limbs of hundreds of children were amputated or children were used to carry out the maiming of others.

2. Over the past three years, there has been a troubling increase in grave violations perpetrated against children in several countries:
   - Iraq, 2017: 279 children killed (143 boys, 84 girls, 52 children of unknown gender); 438 children maimed (270 boys, 143 girls, 25 children of unknown gender);
   - Myanmar, 2017: 296 children killed and maimed (including 169 boys, 62 girls, 36 children of unknown gender);
   - Afghanistan, 2017: 861 killed, 2,318 injured (including 251 girls);
   - Syrian Arab Republic, 2019: 897 children killed, 557 maimed;
   - Yemen, 2018: 395 children killed, 1,052 maimed.

 PROVIDE OR SOLICIT OTHER EXAMPLES, IF TIME PERMITS.

SLIDE 12: RECRUITMENT AND USE

A child associated with an armed force or group (commonly referred to as a “child soldier”) refers to any person below the age of 18 years who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to:
- Fighters
- Cooks
- Porters
- Messengers
- Spies
- For sexual purposes
**Key Message:** Recruitment and use of any person below 18 years by an armed group or armed force in any capacity is prohibited.

- Tens of thousands of boys and girls are recruited and used by armed forces or groups in conflict situations in over 20 countries around the world. As a military peacekeeper, you are likely to encounter children, or “young soldiers”, carrying guns and wearing uniforms. However, it is important for you to know that children – boys and girls – are assigned wide-ranging functions in armed forces or armed groups. Recruitment and use of children by armed forces or groups is prohibited.

A child associated with an armed force or group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to [...] fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes (see Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups, 2007).

It is important to understand that armed groups may use children for a number of functions. For example:

- Direct combat on front lines;
- Intelligence operations, as spies;
- Reconnaissance, as scouts (especially as children are seldom viewed with suspicion);
- Decoys or saboteurs;
- To man checkpoints;
- Communication purposes, as couriers or messengers;
- Other – as porters, cooks, cleaners, etc.;
- Enslavement or sexual purposes, as sex objects or “bush wives”

The abbreviation CAAFAG is often used to refer to a child associated with an armed force or armed group, while “child soldier” is the more commonly used term. The key point is that one does not have to carry a weapon to be a child soldier.

The term "child soldier" should be used in a broad sense, as defined in the slide. Throughout this training course, we will use the term “child soldier” to refer to children recruited or used by an armed group/force in any capacity.

Provide or ask learners for examples of situations involving child soldiers, if time permits.
Key Message: Sexual violence against children is one of the most horrific violations. Although young girls are especially vulnerable to sexual violence in times of conflict, boys are also at risk.

- Rape and other forms of sexual violence during armed conflict are prohibited under the Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Such acts may constitute war crimes, crimes against humanity, torture and genocide.

Children who experience sexual violence suffer from psychological trauma and health consequences, including sexually transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS, and early pregnancies. Victims of rape and their children may experience rejection by their families.

**GIRLS**
The risk of sexual violence increases dramatically with the increase in the number of armed forces and groups, and the breakdown of law and order. Moreover, poverty and joblessness can create extremely perilous conditions for girls, including trafficking for sexual exploitation. Girls and their children are particularly vulnerable to all forms of exploitation, including prostitution and trafficking; they need special protection.

**BOYS**
Boys may also be victims of sexual violence in conflict, and boys may face trauma as witnesses or perpetrators of sexual violence. They may be forced to commit rape, either directly by their commander or indirectly through peer pressure.

**Examples**

1. *Bacha Baazi* (dancing boys) is a practice in Afghanistan that is a form of sexual slavery and child prostitution, in which boys are sold to wealthy or powerful men – including military and political leaders – for entertainment and sexual activities.

2. The United Nations confirmed 249 victims of sexual violence during armed conflict in 2019. Both government forces (126 victims) and armed groups (123 victims) were responsible for the violations. Some 102 government elements were subsequently arrested. Among the 123 cases attributed to armed groups, 22 girls were used for sexual slavery and 101 girls were raped.

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**SLIDE 14: ABDUCTION**

**Abduction**

The unlawful removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child, either temporarily or permanently, for the purpose of any form of exploitation, including:

- Recruitment
- Information gathering
- Forced labour
- Sexual purposes
- Other

**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** In times of conflict, children are particularly vulnerable to abduction.

- The image on the slide shows liberated girls awaiting treatment for their injured feet at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Kitgum, Uganda. The girls were forced to work as porters and domestic slaves for Lord’s Resistance Army in northern Uganda.
Abducting children is illegal under international law; it may constitute a grave breach of the Geneva Conventions and amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes.

In times of conflict, children are often abducted from their homes, schools and refugee camps. Children may be forcefully abducted, either temporarily or permanently, for a range of purposes from recruitment by armed forces or armed groups, forced labour, sexual slavery to trafficking across borders.

**Examples**

1. One of the most notorious situations involving widespread abduction of children, over the past 10 years, took place in northern Uganda, where the number of abductions was estimated to have reached 25,000 or more. Tens of thousands of abducted children were made to serve the rebels. During the two-decade-long conflict, girls and young women were vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse, not only at the hands of the rebels, but by government soldiers as well.

2. In Nigeria, Boko Haram has abducted some 2,000 children since 2013. The girls in captivity were raped and/or became “wives” of Boko Haram members. Many of those girls bore children as a result of sexual violence inflicted.
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

**Key Message:** Attacks on schools and hospitals are considered grave violations owing to the specific impact they have on children.

- Under international humanitarian law, schools and hospitals are protected civilian objects, and therefore benefit from the humanitarian principles of distinction and proportionality.

In recent conflicts, schools and hospitals have come under increasing attack in efforts to discredit the Government or to instil fear in the population. Armed groups, including government troops, also use schools as bases or storage areas, thereby denying education to children. Teachers, nurses and doctors may also come under personal attack in order to make the institutions less effective. Abductions also take place in schools.

Conflict has compound the effects. Short-term loss of education may lead to the loss of several key years of education, which could significantly affect future employment prospects for children.

*Examples*
1. In 2019, in the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Nations confirmed that hospitals and schools had been bombed and, in many cases, specifically targeted by government forces.

2. In the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, some 1,000 attacks on schools and hospitals by members of armed groups were reported in 2017.

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**Denial of Humanitarian Access**

*Blocking free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need, (including children):*

- Attacks against humanitarian workers
- Looting of humanitarian aid
- Denial of access for service delivery

**An estimated 80 million children are denied humanitarian assistance globally.**

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**NOTES (FOR TRAINER)**

**Key Message:** Children are the first to perish from famine and disease; denial of humanitarian access to children is a grave violation.

Denial of humanitarian access to civilians, including children, and attacks against humanitarian workers assisting children are prohibited under the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Additional Protocols and may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes. Moreover, humanitarian access to civilians is a principle of customary international law.

Humanitarian access is crucial in situations of armed conflict where civilians – including children – are in desperate need of assistance. Denial of humanitarian access includes blocking the free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need, including children, as well as deliberate attacks against...
humanitarian workers. Humanitarian access is usually denied or hampered by parties to the conflict for security or political reasons. In many parts of the world, humanitarian assistance is sometimes interrupted because of ongoing fighting.

It is estimated that, in current conflicts around the globe, 80 million children are denied humanitarian assistance.

Examples
1. In 2019, more than 1,800 instances of denial of humanitarian access were documented in Yemen. That represented a dramatic increase from the figures recorded for 2018, and involved restrictions of movement within the country, interference with the delivery of humanitarian assistance, violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities, and restrictions of movement into the country.

2. In Somalia, in 2019, instances of denial of humanitarian access included threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, abduction or detention of personnel and beneficiaries, entry restrictions, disruption and looting.
**Key Message:** Girls and boys are often more vulnerable to certain kinds of threats and violations based on their distinct gender roles within their societies.

Violence against civilians, particularly sexual violence, is a prevalent feature of current conflicts. In situations of armed conflict, women and girls, and often men and boys, are tortured and sexually abused with impunity. Sexual violence is used as a weapon of war to humiliate, terrify and intimidate the victims and their loved ones. Without male relatives, husbands and friends to protect them, women and girls are often at increased risk of physical assault and vulnerability to sexual and other forms of violence.

Girls may be assigned various roles within an armed group, including that of fighters. Girls are often sexually abused and may be forced to be the “wives” of commanders and soldiers. Often the girls become pregnant and bear the soldiers’ children. That makes it particularly challenging to identify girls during disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts. Girls may be easily overlooked and mistaken as soldiers’ wives or dependents, especially because many are too embarrassed or afraid to speak up. They may also have different needs in the reintegration process owing to their different experiences. Peacekeepers should therefore pay special attention to the distinct needs of girls in DDR efforts.
Peacekeepers should be keenly aware of the gender differences relating to girls and boys.

For example:

- In many refugee and internally displaced persons settings, women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence because they usually have to leave the camp on a daily basis in search of firewood for cooking.

- Boys tend to be more often targeted for alleged association with armed forces or armed groups, which may put them at risk of physical attack, as well as illegal detention and torture.

SLIDE 18: CASE STUDIES: GENDER

Case Studies: Gender

• Testimonies from a girl and boy
• Consider some of the factors that can increase the risk of a child being recruited by armed forces/groups during armed conflict
• Reflect on the differences in the experiences of girls and boys associated with armed forces/groups

NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Activity: Comparison of testimonials (10 minutes)

INSTRUCTIONS

Hand out the testimonies of the boy and girl, and display slides 19 and 20. Have a male learner read the boy’s testimony aloud and a female learner read the girl’s testimony aloud. Facilitate a 5-minute open-group discussion, solicit views/comments from about five to seven learners. If necessary, note the responses on a flip chart. You can use the discussion questions below to solicit responses.
Learners should think about the specific vulnerabilities that girls and boys face in situations of armed conflict.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

- Understand the factors and risks that contribute to the recruitment of children by armed forces or armed groups
- Understand that one child may be affected by multiple violations, so that trauma is exacerbated
- Understand the different experiences of boys and girls associated with armed forces or armed groups

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Discuss the testimonies taking into account the following questions:

1. Which factors put Jacques and Jasime at risk during the conflict?
2. How has the fact that they were children at the time of the conflict increased their vulnerability?
3. How do the experiences of Jacques and Jasime differ owing to their different gender roles?

The following responses highlight some of the factors that put children at risk during conflict:

**SUGGESTED RESPONSES**

**Vulnerability factors**

While Jacques appears to have joined the armed group "voluntarily", the loss of his parents and the ensuing lack of protection, food, and housing put him in an extremely difficult and possibly life-threatening situation. Children lack the maturity to make an informed decision as to whether to join an armed force or group and can be more easily influenced than adults. The recruitment of all children – whether they are forced to join or are driven to join by other factors, is prohibited under international law.

Jasime was taken because she was a young girl who could be given to a soldier as a wife, to reward him. Girls are especially chosen for this. Becoming pregnant then increases their dependency on the soldier. As can be seen in this case, the girl has nowhere/nobody else to turn to. She is stigmatized and will not be able to go back to her community or the community of her husband’s family.

Traumatic experiences – like the ones experienced by Jacques and Jasime – can have more severe and long-term effects on children as they are still in the process of physical and intellectual development.

**Gender differences**

The threats and violence that girls and boys face during and after conflict are often different based on their distinct gender roles within their societies. Jacques, like many boys, was mainly used by the armed group for fighting and support tasks. Girls may serve various purposes within an armed force or armed group, including as active combatants, and are often at greater risk of sexual violence, used as sex slaves, or forced to be the “wives” of commanders and soldiers. Some girls become pregnant.
and bear the soldiers’ children. Girls may easily be overlooked and mistaken as soldiers’ dependents. This role makes it particularly challenging to identify girl victims during formal disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts. It is especially crucial that peacekeepers pay special attention to the distinct needs of girls during the DDR process.

The consequences for girls can be long-lasting and particularly difficult. In some cases, communities shun rape victims and children born of rape. Jasime refers to her abductor, the soldier, as her husband; this illustrates one of the difficulties of accessing girls during the DDR process. The stigma associated with sexual violence and the fear of rejection by their family and community is such that many girls are too embarrassed or afraid to speak up. At the age of 16, Jasime now has to take care of her baby on her own.

Why are children most vulnerable during armed conflict? Why do children need special protection in conflict and post-conflict settings? [This was already discussed after the film, A Child’s Fate.]

While many children prove remarkably resilient when faced with extremely difficult circumstances, in general, children are disproportionally affected by armed conflict owing to the following reasons:

1. **Children can be more easily influenced and may not fully understand the consequences of their actions.**
   For example, children may be lured into joining an armed force or armed group, thinking that they will be obtaining “employment” or protection from violence. Children have also been used as “suicide bombers”, carrying explosives hidden in their bags or clothing, without knowing it.

2. **Children depend on family, community and government structures for protection and care.**
   Those structures are destroyed or have collapsed during conflict. That is why displaced or unaccompanied children are at greater risk of violence, exploitation or abuse during conflict.

3. **Children are still growing/in the process of development.**
   Violence in armed conflict poses several risks to the healthy development of children. For example, denial of access to basic services, including adequate nutrition, has a more serious long-term effect on children, particularly babies and younger children, than on adults. Similarly, traumatic and other negative experiences (such as indoctrination) and influences during conflict carry more consequences for children than adults.

Provide the following examples to illustrate gender differences, if necessary to supplement examples in the previous optional exercise.

**Differences in the experiences of girls and boys affected by armed conflict**
In refugee and internally displaced persons settings throughout the world, women and girls are more vulnerable to sexual violence because they usually have to leave
the camps on a daily basis in search of firewood for cooking. For example, in Darfur, women and girls often walk several kilometres away from the camps to find a few branches to burn. That makes them prime targets for militia groups, national military or police forces and others who act in a climate of impunity.

In Afghanistan, most victims of anti-personnel mines and other explosive remnants of war are boys between the ages of 8 and 15. In Afghan society, boys usually assume roles that require them to be outdoors, such as herding cattle. Boys also tend to be targeted for alleged association with armed forces or armed groups, which may put them at risk of physical attack as well as illegal detention and torture.

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**SLIDE 19: TESTIMONY OF A BOY**

**Testimony of a Boy**

Jacques was recruited into the insurgent group Mayi-Mayi when he was 10 years old.

“I remember the day I decided to join the Mayi-Mayi. It was after an attack on my village. My parents and 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 would 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 of a Girl

Jasmine was recruited by the insurgent group Mayi-Mayi in South-Kivu, when she was 12 years old. She is now 16 and has a four-month-old baby.

“When the Mayi-Mayi attacked my village, we all ran away.... The soldiers captured all the girls, even the very young. Once with the soldiers, you were forced to "marry" one of the soldiers.... If you refused, they would kill you... They would slaughter people like chickens.... Wherever we were fighting, along the way, they would take the women and girls working in the fields... They would take young girls, remove their clothes, and then would rape them.... My "husband" did not beat me too often.... But one day, he was killed in an attack. I felt I was in danger and I should leave. On the way, as I was pregnant, I had my baby. I was alone in the bush, without medication. I still have pain from this. Then I went to my "husband's" village, but his parents rejected me and my child, after taking all my belongings. They blamed me for his death. I wanted to go home, but it is so far away, I was afraid the Mayi-Mayi would find me and capture me again.”

Takeaways

- A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Children face specific risks during armed conflict.
- The nature of conflict has changed and severely affects children.
- There are six (categories of) “grave violations” against children.
- Protection needs of boys and girls may differ.

Summary

**Takeaways from Lesson 1.1:**
- A child is anyone under the age of 18 years.
- Children face specific risks during armed conflict.
- The nature of conflict has changed and severely affects children.
- There are six (categories of) grave violations against children.
- Protection needs of boys and girls may differ.
References (1/2)

- United Nations, Report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2020/487), June 2020
- United Nations, DPKO (Integrated Training Service), Core Pre-Deployment Training Materials, 2017
- International Campaign to Ban Landmines – Cluster Munition Coalition, Landmine Monitor 2020, November 2020
References (2/2)

- United Nations, UNDDR, Operational Guide to the Integrated Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Standards (IDDRS) 2014 (see chapters 5.20 on “Youth and DDR” and 5.30 “Children and DDR”)
NOTES (FOR TRAINER)

Allow sufficient time for questions to be asked/answered. Actively encourage questions from learners.