



Side event: Children and armed conflict

**“Protecting schools and hospitals from attacks:
Challenges and opportunities in implementing Security Council resolution 1998 (2011)”**

**Introductory remarks by Mr. Jean-Marc HOSCHEIT, Permanent Representative of
Luxembourg to the UN at Geneva (13 March 2014)**

Ambassador de Crombrughe, Dear colleague,

Madam the Special Representative,

Dear panelists,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm particularly pleased to be here today and welcome this opportunity to address the protection of children's rights to education and healthcare in situations of armed conflict.

Let me mention, in particular, the recent attacks in Syria on school buildings in Dar'a killing five children and injuring around 20. Two days ago, in a side event on the situation of Children in Syria, unbearable images were shown of children that have been victims of napalm – like bombings in their school.

I took the example of Syria, but such attacks are also recurrent in other conflict situations, notably in the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Nigeria and Afghanistan.

The situation is bleak. Attacks against education occur throughout the world. Not only schools but also hospitals are being increasingly targeted even if they should be areas of peace where children are protected even in times of armed conflict. Thousands of deliberated and targeted attacks against educational, medical and sanitary installations have been reported in recent years. Students, professors, doctors and other medical personal are being killed, injured, kidnapped or arrested precisely because of their connection to educational or

health services. In addition, schools and hospitals are increasingly used for military purposes. Transformed into barracks, detention centers, military training camps, weapons depots or even military bases, schools and hospitals become *de facto* military targets.

The life and well-being of children are hence directly endangered and their fundamental rights to education and healthcare are violated. The long-term effects of such acts are devastating. The quality of education and the educational system are seriously weakened; the number of teachers and students decreases, thus having adverse effects on the social and economic development of any country. Thus by attacking schools, not only hopes and ambitions of a whole generation are destroyed, but the future of an entire country is endangered.

Child protection in times of armed conflict is a priority of Luxembourg, including as a non-permanent member of the Security Council. Since 1 January 2013, Luxembourg has the honor to chair for two years the Working Group of the Security Council on children in armed conflicts. Let me point out in this regard, that under the Luxembourg Presidency of the Council, a new resolution on children and armed conflict - resolution 2143 - was adopted unanimously no later than last Friday.

Notably in its paragraphs 16 to 19, this resolution lays a heavy emphasis on the issues of access to education and health facilities and the absolute necessity to demilitarize and respect these facilities and the personnel that operate those. International humanitarian law must be observed and perpetrators duly prosecuted.

Recognizing that education is not only a fundamental human right for all children, but also one of the most efficient tools for development, as it prevents conflicts and allows countries to rebuild themselves, Luxembourg has made every effort, i.a. through this resolution, to strengthen the protection of schools and medical facilities in times of conflict.

More than ever these objectives must be at the center of our political scrutiny and action, as well as of the vigilance of civil society. Let me conclude by expressing the hope that an event like this one and everybody enabled in this room today can contribute to this aim!

Thank you for your attention.