



Norwegian statement on Children and Armed Conflict  
As delivered by Ambassador Anne-Kirsti Karlsen at the Forum for Security  
Cooperation  
Vienna, 14 September 2022

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairperson, Dear Colleagues

Norway aligns with the statement made by the European Union and stands fully behind its content. Allow me to make a few remarks in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

Today's security dialog focuses on a topic that is all too relevant. Through the Russian Federation's invasion of its sovereign neighbour the world has once again been reminded of the disproportionate impact war has on children. In Ukraine almost a thousand children have been killed or wounded. More than one in ten schools are destroyed, and many of the countries' 5.7 million children missed what should have been their first day back at school. We have even heard about children being deported and offered for adoption. The war continues to adversely affect children's physical as well as mental wellbeing on a scale not seen in Europe since World War II.

The Russian Federation bears the full responsibility for this miserable state of affairs. Norway thus calls on Russia to respect and implement the OSCE principles and their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

Mr. Chair,

It was an honour for Norway to co-organize with you this morning's side event on "OSCE Tools on Children and Armed Conflict". The topic of today's security dialogue underlines the importance of cooperation across the OSCE's three dimensions, and we look back at a constructive discussion. Allow me to present and emphasize some of the recommendations from this morning's discussions, relevant for the FSC and the code of conduct.

- The importance of participating States to educate their armed forces personnel on international humanitarian rules and conventions.
- The need for military structures to abstain from occupying school buildings with armed personnel or artillery but continue to use them for educational purposes only.
- Avoid placing military targets in proximity to schools and hospitals.

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- Effective legislative provisions and proportionate criminal penalties for people who are guilty of violating children's rights and holding perpetrators accountable under national and international law.
- Protect children from indecent assaults by armed personnel by keeping arrested or detained children separate from adults who are not family.

In today's meeting we also heard calls and proposals about synchronizing the OSCE executive structures to issue thematic reports, reviews, meetings and other events on children's rights, both in Ukraine and elsewhere.

Mr. Chair,

Norway calls on all participating states to do everything possible to ensure that children's basic human rights are respected, and that special attention is paid to children's conditions in times of war, in line with the 1990 Copenhagen- and the 1999 Istanbul documents. We also heard references today of the recommendations from the 2000 HDS in Warsaw, and had confirmed that the code of conduct has relevant provisions. We as an organization must do all in our power to protect those who are among the most vulnerable to the horrors of war. Let us protect the children!

Thank you!