

disarmament forum

Children and Security

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The plight of child soldiers, the widespread use of landmines and small arms, and images of children lined up in refugee camps awaiting food or medical care have helped to sensitize the international community to the suffering inflicted on children during armed conflict. The protection and security of children is traditionally approached from a human rights perspective, focusing on treaties and conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Surprisingly, it is only recently that the question of child protection has been approached from a 'security-oriented' perspective. Efforts such as Security Council resolutions 1261, 1314 and 1379 are helping to raise awareness and reframe child protection as a human security issue.

Ensuring the security of children in armed conflicts demands new thinking and partnerships that combine the expertise and action of disarmament, human rights, humanitarian and development specialists. In this *Disarmament Forum* we introduce our readers to the special needs and circumstances of children and their security in times of conflict. We study the promises made by the United Nations and the international community to protect children, investigate the impact of small arms on children, present the urgent topic of juvenile justice in relation to counter-terrorism operations, and highlight the monitoring and verification efforts of an NGO network.

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