

Iowa High School Model United Nations
SH&C
Protection of Children in Armed Conflict
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Background/Past UN Actions

Children are at the heart of our future. Armed conflicts are destroying the futures of innocent children in dozens of countries. All-non combatants by law are entitled to protection, but children in war struck countries are being killed, forced into slavery, and forced to join militant organizations. These children are becoming the victims of many of the things wars are trying to prevent. The trend of these children victims has increased in a response to wars springing up in the East. Many militant groups are kidnapping children from their homes and schools, and forcing the children to be soldiers, sex slaves, and laborers. The results from these situations are devastating to the future of many developing and developed nations. To this date, it is estimated 8 million children have been victims of armed conflict.

There is much debate over how to prevent this illegal trafficking and use of children. The United Nations started focusing on the basics of childhood protection in the United Nation Charter, written in 1945. Since 1945 over a dozen international laws have been written concerning this issue. The latest law was passed in October 2002, titled "A World Fit for Children." It attempted to make a better future for children by setting objectives concerning education, protection, and aiming to give children a great start to their futures. Besides the international laws, resolutions have been written every few years aiming to fix this issue, and many UN member countries have dedicated time and

funding to this problem. Organizations such as The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) advocate and fundraise for the cause while collaborating with the Office of the Special Representative, the Security Council, and the Department of Peacekeeping organizations. While laws, resolutions, boards, and groups like UNICEF have greatly improved protection for children, regrettably thousands of children are still in grave danger in armed conflict situations.

Conclusion

The United Nations has been fighting for over half a decade to protect children in armed conflicts. While many attempts to prevent this problem have helped, thousands of children are still being injured and kidnapped in war struck countries. New attempts to protect these children must be made while dozens of countries are still affected.

Questions to consider

How are the children in your country affected by armed conflicts?

If you have a problem within your nation, is there a major cause?

Is this problem one that may be an issue in the foreseeable future within your country?

What policies and preventative steps are in place in your nation regarding this issue?

What could be done to reduce the toll on affected nations?

Where are the threats of children being affected by armed conflict the worse?

Consulted/Recommended Sources

<http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/home6.html>