



Strengthening Monitoring, Reporting and Response to the Denial of Humanitarian Access to Children

12 June 2025

3 – 4:30pm EST

Conference Room 6, United Nations Headquarters

1. Concept / Event

Since the Security Council adopted its Resolution 1612 (2005), the UN has been reporting on the denial of humanitarian access to children as one of the six grave violations. In recent years, a significant increase in the denial of humanitarian access to children in the situations on the children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda signaled an urgent need to ensure that all those monitoring, reporting and advocating are equipped with strong tools to end and prevent the denial of humanitarian access to children, in line with the Security Council request.

As a step towards strengthening the monitoring, reporting and response to the denial of humanitarian access to children in the framework of the CAAC agenda, the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG CAAC) in consultation with the Technical Reference Group (TRG) on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)¹ and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs published in April 2025 a “Guidance Note on the Denial of Humanitarian Access” and its background note. This event offers a platform for presenting the guidance while taking stock of opportunities for engaging relevant UN partners who are contributing to monitoring and reporting on the ground, as well as the efforts to prevent and end denial of humanitarian access as a grave violation.

2. Background and Rationale

Early in the CAAC agenda, the denial of humanitarian access to children was identified as a critical issue affecting children in conflict situations and over the years, cases of the denial of humanitarian access as reported through the MRM have been steadily on the rise. The denial of humanitarian access is one of the six grave violations the UN monitors through the MRM pursuant to the UN Security

¹ The Technical Reference Group (TRG) on the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) is co-chaired by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF and has as its members the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The TRG on the MRM was established in 2010 and it serves as a platform for consultation, identification of lessons learned and best practices, and development of guidance for the MRM.

Council resolution 1612 (2005). Since 2018, at least 18, 440 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access have been verified through the MRM, which included, among others, targeted violence against humanitarian relief personnel and facilities, the looting of life-saving supplies, and onerous physical and administrative barriers. Cases of denial of humanitarian access have been steadily increasing over the past 5 years and remained particularly high since 2020 (around 4, 000 incidents). The Secretary-General's 2024 [annual report](#) on CAAC presented at the June 2024 Open Debate cited 5,025 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access for the reporting year 2023, with most affected situations in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Mali, Myanmar, Ukraine, and Yemen.

During the high-level and technical [regional consultations](#) in 2018-2020, the Country Task Forces for Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMRs), their equivalents in non-MRM countries including UN Country Teams, and the Regional Offices of UN entities, recommended to the TRG on the MRM to increase guidance on the documentation of all six grave violations against children in armed conflict. It was suggested to develop practical and user-friendly guidelines for UN entities participating in the monitoring and reporting of grave violations at the field level to complement or address emerging trends and needs. In 2022, the OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF in collaboration with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs produced a [Guidance Note on Abduction](#), aimed at strengthening the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 2225 (2015) including monitoring and reporting and advocacy and dialogue with parties to conflict. Previously in 2014, the OSRSG CAAC with UNICEF and UNESCO produced a [Guidance Note on Security Council Resolution 1998](#) on protecting schools and hospitals.

On the occasion of the 19 July 2022 Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict hosted by the Government of Brazil, the United States and the European Union called upon the Special Representative to develop a guidance note on the denial of humanitarian access as well as other grave violations. The Government of Germany aligned itself with the statement of the European Union at the Open Debate. In their [policy note](#) "Denial of Humanitarian Access for Children: Legal, Policy and Operational Challenges" published in early 2022, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and Fordham University recommended that the OSRSG CAAC, in collaboration with the TRG on the MRM, develops a guidance note on monitoring, reporting, advocacy, and dialogue on denial of humanitarian access for children, in line with existing guidance notes for other grave violations against children, including the guidance note on Security Council Resolution 1998 on attacks against schools and hospitals.

The UN field monitors have applied and benefited from the guidelines produced to date as reflected, for instance, in stronger reporting through the quarterly Global Horizontal Notes (GHNs) the Special Representative and UNICEF present to the UN Security Council Working Group on CAAC covering all situations on the CAAC agenda. In implementation of the above calls from UN field partners, Member States and civil society alike, development of the guidelines on monitoring and reporting on the denial of humanitarian access would support the field practitioners in application of the [MRM Field Manual](#), strengthen the MRM reporting mandated by the UN Security Council and therefore the Secretary-General's reports on CAAC, and provide further direction for conducting dialogue and advocacy with parties to conflict to end and prevent the denial of humanitarian access as a violation. The sum of these efforts would lead to stronger protection of children impacted by armed conflict.

3. Objectives

On the occasion of this event, participants are invited to:

- Examine the impact of the denial of humanitarian access on children in armed conflict situations, including links with the other grave violations and considering gender as a cross-cutting issue,
- Discuss the opportunities for the implementation of the forthcoming guidance and its contributions to the work in the field,
- Propose ideas for strengthened collaboration and engagement at the field and global levels, including in the framework of the CTFMRs and their equivalents, and
- Hear field perspectives on all the above.

4. Format

This 1.5-hour event will take place at the United Nations Headquarters in Conference Room 6 and will include a presentation of the “Guidance Note on the Denial of Humanitarian Access” and its companion piece by the Special Representative, panel interventions, and an interactive component.

5. Program

Opening Remarks:

H.E. Mr. Thomas Peter Zahneisen, Deputy Permanent Representative of Germany to the United Nations (confirmed)

Moderator:

Ms. Dragica Mikavica, Programme Officer, Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (confirmed)

Panel Interventions:

Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (confirmed)

Mr. Aurelien Buffler, Chief of Policy Advice and Planning, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) (confirmed)

Ms. Patricia Njeri Njoroge, Chief, Child Protection Unit / Senior Child Protection Officer, United Nations Mission in South Sudan (to be confirmed)

Ms. Katie Rice, Chief Child Protection, UNICEF Libya (confirmed)

Statements from the floor (additional co-sponsors will speak first)

Closing Remarks:

H.E. Ms. Sophie Jang De Smedt, Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations (confirmed)