

**THIS EVENT IS OPEN TO ALL COUNTRIES THAT WISH TO JOIN THIS INITIATIVE AND WHO ARE
COMMITTED TO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS**

**CONCEPT NOTE
“WE WANT TO PROVE IT MATTERS”**

The number of children affected by armed conflict is increasing year after year. The year 2024 marked a devastating new record: the United Nations verified 41,370 grave violations against children—a staggering 25 per cent increase compared to 2023. Behind these numbers are the shattered stories, dreams, and futures of children, each of them profoundly affected by war, displacement, and the collapse of protection systems that should have served as their shield. In these figures, we witness a sharp rise in the number of conflict-affected children subjected to multiple grave violations.

Over 473 million children—more than one in six globally—now live in areas affected by conflict, with the world experiencing the highest number of conflicts since World War II. The percentage of the world's children living in conflict zones has doubled—from around 10 per cent in the 1990s to almost 19 per cent today. A child growing up in a conflict zone is far more likely to be out of school, malnourished, or forced from its home—too often repeatedly—compared to a child living in places of peace. This must not be the new normal. We cannot allow a generation of children to become collateral damage to the world's unchecked wars.

The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General decided to launch on 12 March 2025 in Geneva, ‘Prove It Matters’, a new global campaign raising awareness and calling for the urgent need to uphold the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and ensure that children's voices are heard. The campaign urged Member States to publicly reaffirm their commitment to the CRC and take immediate steps to protect children's fundamental rights to life, health, education, and safety. It also invites children worldwide, particularly those affected by conflict, to participate in a symbolic initiative and create origami doves to share their messages to the world. These origami doves will be collected throughout the year to form a giant collective art piece to be displayed at the United Nations in New York in 2026.

This global effort relied on strong partnerships. The Office of the Special Representative is collaborating closely with Member States identified as Champions, UN agencies, NGOs, and, most importantly, children themselves.

“We cannot continue to stand by and watch with no action what is happening to the children globally” (Virginia Gamba). We can no longer do business as usual. Things must change, and must change quickly. We need to stop this trend. We need to raise awareness of this grave situation and start reverting the numbers, and this can only be done with the personal implication and engagement of world leaders at the highest level. We all need to act together and make this situation visible!

For all these reasons, we propose the organization (by Member States identified as Champions, supporters of the “Prove it matters” campaign, and members of the Group of Friends on Children in Armed Conflict, as well as any other country that wishes to join this initiative) of a high-level side-event during the High-Level Week to officially launching in New York the “Prove it Matters” campaign, gathering the maximum number of Heads of State and Government and High-Level Officials from UN countries, together with other renown ambassadors or activists engaged in children's issues.

The side event will take a form of a “Pledge for Action”, with the adoption of a **Pledge** by all engaged countries, with the participation of all media. Leaders can make the difference when they personally commit themselves.

Now is the time to renew our collective commitment to protect the most vulnerable in times of conflict: children. We all **MUST** stand together in this endeavour because we need to **Prove it Matters!**

“Prove It Matters”

United in recognition of our shared responsibility to protect children and uphold their rights, including in situations of armed conflict,

And in support of the **Prove It Matters** campaign developed by the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, we hereby declare:

1. Our Recommitment to the CRC.

We publicly reaffirm our unwavering commitment to uphold the spirit and obligations of the CRC, to safeguard children’s rights, including those in situations of armed conflict, ensuring their rights to life, health, education, and protection from violence.

2. Our Support for Children’s Voices

We affirm that children must be seen, heard, and respected at every level. We commit to listening to their calls for peace and dignity and to ensuring their participation in shaping a safer, more just world.

We reaffirm our collective determination to protect and promote children’s rights, and we call on all countries to join this initiative by sharing their recommitments to the CRC and for all to translate words into deeds.

Together, we can reignite the spirit of consensus and global unity that first brought us together to protect children. Now is the time to once again rally behind the CRC, the most widely ratified convention in the world, and renew our collective commitment to protect children.

**Children have rights. Children want peace. It’s time for us to listen and take action. It’s time for us to
*Prove It Matters!***

Wednesday, 24 September 2025, 8h30am. Room 1. UNHQ

Programme

- (8:35- 8:37 am) Prove It Matters video (1:27 minutes) - English subtitles
- (8:38 – 8:39 am) Video from the Secretary-General (0:58 minute) - Prove It Matters
- (8:40- 8:50 am) Official Photo of all participants
- (8:51 – 8:56 am) Statement from a renown Children’s activist (TBC)
- (8:57 - 8:59am) Closing remarks from the Head of Government of Andorra
- (9:00 am) closure of the event

Champion countries (12): Andorra, Austria, Brazil, Central African Republic, Colombia, Greece, Liechtenstein, Malta, Philippines, Qatar, United Kingdom, Uruguay

Other campaign supporters (recommitting to the CRC) (21): Armenia, Azerbaijan, Costa Rica, Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Guatemala, Guyana, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Malaysia, Moldova, Montenegro, Mozambique, Nigeria, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovakia, Slovenia, Ukraine (list to be kept up to date)

Group of friends (50): Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Benin, Canada, Chile, Costa Rica, Côte d’Ivoire, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Ecuador, Estonia, European Union, Finland, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mexico, Namibia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Norway, Peru, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tanzania, Ukraine, Uruguay.