

Our work to protect children caught up in armed conflicts around the world

Thank you President. I join others in thanking our briefers for their illuminating remarks.

I would like to highlight three points in relation to what we have heard today.

Firstly, the United Kingdom welcomes the inclusion of the situations in Ukraine, Ethiopia and Mozambique in the Secretary-General's annual report. Data gathered by UN agencies and NGOs on the ground attests to the serious protection needs of children in these countries.

Establishing Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms will build an even stronger evidence base, so that all parties can identify actions needed to prevent grave violations against children.

In Ukraine, there is already ample evidence that Russia is committing at least four of the six grave violations against children. SRSG Gamba will have our full support in engaging on this agenda. But there is only one solution to ending the suffering of Ukrainian children: an end to Russia's illegal invasion.

Secondly, President, we are deeply concerned that attacks on schools have continued to increase, including targeted attacks on girls' schools. The United Kingdom has long campaigned for the right of every girl to 12 years of quality education, including girls affected by conflict.

We continue to urge all Member States to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration, and to address the gendered impact of attacks on education. And I again echo the Secretary-General's call for the Taliban to enable the immediate return of all Afghan girls to the classroom.

Thirdly, President, the increase in cases of sexual violence against children documented in the Secretary-General's report is particularly concerning, given that these figures no doubt represent only the tip of the iceberg.

Tackling sexual violence in conflict and ensuring support for survivors remains a top priority for the United Kingdom, including with respect to children. We will convene an international conference in London in November to that end.

Ahead of that conference, we are committed to strengthening the international legal architecture to improve accountability for sexual violence in conflict, and to rolling out the Murad Code, launched here in April. We welcome all Member States to join us in that effort.

Thank you, President.