



ORDRE SOUVERAIN MILITAIRE ET HOSPITALIER
DE SAINT-JEAN DE JERUSALEM DE RHODES ET DE MALTE

MISSION PERMANENTE D'OBSERVATION AUPRES DE L'OFFICE DES NATIONS UNIES
ET DES AUTRES ORGANISATIONS INTERNATIONALES A GENEVE

***Human Rights Council – 31st session – Item 3
Interactive Dialogue
“Protection of Children”***

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Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Order of Malta would like to stress the quality of the reports under consideration today on the protection of children. The Order recognises the importance of the Council's simultaneous discussion of these reports:

1. Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (A/HRC/31/19), by Madame Leila Zerrougui¹.
The Order of Malta welcomes the progress realised in the « Children not Soldiers » Campaign and supports her recommendations on strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict.

2. Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children (A/HRC/31/20), by Madame Marta Santos Pais.²
The Order of Malta supports her request to promote a culture of respect of the rights of the child and of zero tolerance for violence. We welcome her mention that 2016 could be the start of a new era for the protection of children thanks to an improved synergy between international legal instruments and local actors.

These two excellent reports complement each other. They cover the same issue: children in detention. The Order of Malta³ welcomes and supports their recommendations, especially those relating to displaced children and refugees, as well as children deprived of liberty.

¹ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/fr/>

² <http://srsg.violenceagainstchildren.org/fr>

³ www.orderofmalta.int

The Order of Malta France has actually been working on an educational project for detained children in Madagascar for a number of years. The Order is also running a similar project in the Democratic Republic of Congo together with *Malteser International*⁴ and actively aids Syrian children fleeing from violence, who have become internally displaced or refugees in Lebanon⁵ and Turkey.

Considering the complexity of ensuring the respect of children's right to be protected from violence in any kind of situation and the multitude of actors concerned, it is important to have a comprehensive view. The necessary means must be allocated to confront the challenges to children's rights, which are not only related to humanitarian issues but also to economics and security. We would like to underline the value of restorative justice and recall the often indispensable role of faith-based organisations in the reinsertion, education and professional training of children who become victims of violence in armed conflicts.

The global campaign (« Children, not soldiers »)⁶ was launched exactly two years ago, on March 7, 2014, in New York. We hope that it will receive the resources and political support necessary for its successful implementation. The protection of all child victims of violence and armed conflict justly deserves efforts from both the Security Council in New York⁷ and the Human Rights Council in Geneva.

⁴ www.malteser-international.org

⁵ <http://www.orderofmaltalebanon.org/fr/services/thecenters>

⁶ <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/children-not-soldiers-one-year-anniversary/>

⁷ The United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 2215 (2015), on 18 June 2015, condemning the kidnapping of children, mostly perpetrated by non-State actors such as the terrorist organisations ISIS and Boko Haram. This has been as major step towards a better protection of the 250 million children living in situations of conflict. Under the presidency of France the Security Council organized a public debate on children in armed conflicts, on March 25, 2015, in the presence of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Director General of UNICEF. France invited States to commit to the *Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups* (<http://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf>)