



**PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK**

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SECURITY COUNCIL - ARRIA-FORMULA MEETING ON 'PROTECTION OF EDUCATION IN CONFLICT'

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTIAN WENAWESER

PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN TO THE UNITED NATIONS

Excellency,

Thank you for convening this meeting, which comes at a particularly concerning time for the access of children to education worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant further undermining of the right to education – already one of the most gravely affected human rights during conflict. Liechtenstein is alarmed about attacks against schools and other educational institutions, which violate the right to education and often constitute war crimes. As the SRSR on Children and Armed Conflict laid out in her most recent report, lockdowns caused by the spread of COVID-19 have led to the closure of schools, resulting in an increase of military use of schools, which often remained in place after lockdowns ended, with a strong negative impact on children's education. Girls are usually the first to drop out of school and the last to return, in too many cases children will never see a classroom again. In this respect, we all have an obligation to insist on the respect of the right to quality education of all girls in Afghanistan – a situation of ongoing serious concern.

This violation of the right to education also has a devastating short- and long-term impact on sustainable development not only SDG 4. The closure of schools in conflict areas is heightening vulnerabilities for child labour, child, early and forced marriage, human trafficking and modern slavery. It also further exacerbates the risk of child recruitment by armed forces or armed groups,

one of the six grave violations. The recruitment of children continues to have a devastating effect, while important work has been done to address this scourge. We wish to highlight in particular the action plans concluded between the office of the SRSG with conflict parties as well as the focus of the International Criminal Court on this particular type of crime, both in its judicial work and through the Trust Fund for Victims.

Excellency,

Liechtenstein is proud to have cosponsored Resolution 2601 on the Protection of Education in conflict in October, one of the most significant achievements of the Council's thematic work this year. We appreciate the efforts of the facilitators Norway and Niger to ensure its passage with a significant number of cosponsors. We hope that the Council will follow up by increasing its focus on the protection of education in armed conflict, also in the context of its country-specific work, as well as encouraging other relevant institutions and bodies across the UN system to support it in this aim. Liechtenstein notes in particular the reference in the resolution to the Safe Schools Declaration, which remains an important tool and requires full implementation.

I thank you.