

Child Soldiers and Security Forces [ESS.2018.003]

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Disclaimer: To register for the 2019 version of this course, please click on the new link here: <https://www.unitar.org/event/full-catalog/child-soldiers-and-security-forces-ess2019003-0>

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According to the UN Secretary-General's 2014 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, 7 national armies and 50 armed groups operating in 14 countries recruit and use child soldiers. These children and youths are viewed as cheap and expendable labour and are easy to manipulate and control by commanders. They are used as combatants, messengers, porters and cooks and to provide forced sexual services. Some are abducted or forcibly recruited, while others are driven to join by poverty, abuse and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against them or their families.

All of these factors make the phenomenon of child soldiers an increased security concern- not only is the security of the children put at risk but, in of themselves, child soldiers present a significant security risk for communities. A concern that must include security sectors as part of the solution.

By offering innovative training to those actors who encounter child soldiers in the field, UNITAR PTP is dedicated to the achievement of a world, in which children are no longer used as a weapon of war.

The objective of this course is to advance a better understanding of the phenomenon of child soldiering as well as the

reasons behind the use of children in armed conflicts. The course also aims to provide an overview of the possible options for interactions between police, military and child soldiers, as well as the possible actions to prevent recruitment and re-recruitment of child soldiers.

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At the end of the course, participants should be able to:

- Outline the major issues related to the phenomenon of child soldiers;
- Identify legal instruments that discipline the protection of civilians in conflict situations;
- Illustrate possible options for interaction with child soldiers;
- Develop strategies for preventing the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers.

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Module 0: Introduction: Children in Armed Conflict

The module introduces the topic of child soldiers, by framing it in the broader discussion of the nature of contemporary conflicts. It describes the new methods of warfare and focuses on the impact of conflict on children.

Module 1: Introduction to the phenomenon of child soldiering

The module provides the essential information necessary to understand the complexity of child soldiers' phenomenon, by offering an introduction to and an overview of the issue of child soldiers. Module one moves from the definition of child soldier – as outlined in the Paris Principles – and discusses how and why child soldiers are used. The use of child soldiers is elucidated by presenting current statistics of quantity and concentration of the phenomenon. The module explores the reasons, driving factors and risk factors that lead children to be recruited. It also discusses the detrimental social effects of using child soldiers, for the children themselves and for the military and police forces that encounter them, making the case of why child soldiers should not be used.

Module 2: Legal framework and its application

Module two takes a closer look at the existing legal instruments that apply to child soldiers. It examines the specific provisions of the different bodies of law at the international level (such as those contained in International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, and United Nations Security Council Resolutions), at the regional and national level, to delineate the legal framework for the protection of children from their recruitment and use as soldiers. The module also discusses the legal consequences for infringement of these provisions.

Module 3: Interaction with child soldiers

The module focuses on the interaction with child soldiers and begins by offering an overview of the different types of interactions that may occur between national and/or international military and police forces and child soldiers. The module provides substantive guidance on tactics, techniques and procedures to handle armed groups that use child soldiers and child soldiers directly and it offers basic operational guidance

Module 4: Preventing the recruitment and/or re-recruitment of child soldiers

This module focuses on the strategies aiming at preventing the recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers. It elaborates on the importance of including children in peace agreements and demobilization plans and stresses the importance of cooperation among different actors on the ground for the development of a comprehensive programme strategy that includes activities at different societal levels. The module concludes discussing the consequences of failing to prevent recruitment and re-recruitment of children as soldiers.

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The Child Soldiers and Security Forces E-Learning course is a self-paced, web-based course to be accessed at will and at any time by the participants. Materials are presented in text format with supporting audio commentary, visual aids

and web-based resources for self-administered further exploration of contents. Regular quiz activities will enable participants to scrutinize the knowledge which the course intends to convey. The course will furthermore make use of reflection tasks asking the participants to elaborate the contents further and convert situations, actions and lessons learned to their own contexts.

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The primary audience of the training course is constituted by military or police personnel involved in peace operations in conflict and post-conflict environments. Secondly, the course addresses civilian personnel (from United Nations, other international and regional organizations, governmental and nongovernmental organizations), students, researchers and academics having a keen interest to acquire a better understanding of the phenomenon of child soldiers from a military and/or police perspective.

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Technical Requirements

UNITAR recommends the following as a minimum in hardware and software to take our e-Learning courses. Please consult your Network Administrator or Systems person to ensure that you have the following:

Platform:

Windows 7 or superior;
MacOS 10.6 (Snow Leopard) or superior;
Linux.

Hardware:

Intel Core 2 Duo – or AMD – 3 GHz processor;
3 GB of RAM (4 GB recommended);
Hard drive: 160 GB minimum.

Software:

Adobe Acrobat Reader;
Adobe Flash Player.

Browser:

Google Chrome 30.0 or superior;
Mozilla Firefox 25.0 or superior;
Safari 7 or superior;
Microsoft Edge

Note that JavaScript, Cookies and Popups must be enabled

Mobile:

- Apple iOS in Apple iOS 10 or superior on iPad:

Articulate Mobile Player;
Moodle Mobile.

- Android OS in Android OS 4.1 or superior (optimized for tablets):

Articulate Mobile Player;
Moodle Mobile.

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