**Pledge title**:

Protect the rights of children affected by armed conflicts

**Type of pledge**:

Open

**International Conference theme / topics related to this pledge**

This pledge relates to the following topics of the 33rd International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent: respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), including Draft zero resolution on “*Bringing IHL home: A road map for better national implementation of international humanitarian law*” (point 2, first part and point 6), as well as the Report on Contemporary Challenges to International Humanitarian Law to be submitted to the Conference.

**Pledge for the period 2019 – 2023**

The respect, protection and promotion of the rights of children represent keystones for the full and harmonious development of every society. Any armed conflict produce a devastating, pernicious impact on the life of children, on their bodies and minds. Violations of the rights of the child do not only endanger the lives of children in conflict, but also undermine the overall stability and welfare of our societies. While protecting children from the horrors of war is both a moral and legal imperative for the international community, violations against children continue unabated.

In this framework, the international community has identified six grave violations against children in times of war: recruitment, abduction, killing and maiming, sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access. In particular, the denial of humanitarian access has had an appalling impact on children in a range of conflict situations. Thus, the whole international community must take care of the special short term and long term needs of children involved in armed conflicts, both while conflicts are occurring and after they are finished. States shall undertake all the necessary actions to preserve the fundamental value of the children, as the most precious resources for the future of humankind. To break the cycle of violations affecting children, we must take a systematic and coherent approach, from prevention to accountability and reintegration.

**A) Objective and content of the pledge**

Considering the importance of the abovementioned issue, with the objective to create a positive, long-lasting result for the protection of the rights of children involved in armed conflicts, we hereby pledge to:

**Content of the pledge**:

Undertake all the appropriate and necessary actions to reduce the impact of armed conflicts on the life of children; integrate into the military training and into all levels of military planning and decision-making the due consideration of the needs of children affected by armed conflicts; ensure the access to education in situations of armed conflict and provide special support to the re-establishment of educational facilities in post-conflict times.

**B) Action Plan**

* Encourage States to sign and ratify to the First Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Right of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, supporting its universal ratification.
* Work to ensure that humanitarian actors are given unimpeded access to children during armed conflicts.
* Conduct awareness campaigns, both at bilateral and multilateral level and where appropriate in cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, about the importance to prevent the recruitment and use of children during armed conflicts, to secure the release of child soldiers, and to ensure their comprehensive and successful reintegration through long-term interventions.
* Integrate into the military training and into all levels of military planning and decision-making the due consideration of the needs of children in armed conflicts, thereby organizing specific training sessions for the national military forces on the rights of the children in armed conflicts.
* Promote and support international initiatives and programs aimed at preventing and combating all forms of violence, in particular sexual violence, against children during armed conflicts, also encouraging States to adopt, develop and implement the legal and administrative measures needed to ensure that all violations against children are criminalized and perpetrators are brought to justice, in compliance with the provisions of the relevant international instruments.
* Actively contribute to the outreach activities of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC).
* Promote the awareness of the importance of CAAC, also through the inclusion of references to this issue in resolutions, statements and other pertinent documents to be adopted by the UN and other relevant multilateral fora.
* Encourage the States that have not yet done so, to sign the Safe School Declaration and to promote its effective implementation, also raising awareness on the Declaration with a view to improve the protection of education in situations of armed conflicts and handle the consequences of armed conflict on students, education personnel and school infrastructure.
* Continue to work in cooperation with and to support the activities of the UN Special Representative for children and armed conflict**.**

**C) Indicators for measuring progress.**

**D) Resource implications**

States will determine the resources that may be required to support the implementation of this pledge based on actions to be taken in their specific context.