BUILDING A CHILDREN, PEACE, AND SECURITY AGENDA IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

OUR WORK IN THE DRC

Despite progress towards stabilization in the past decade, including the relatively peaceful transition of power following the 2018 elections, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) remains one of the world's most complex humanitarian emergencies. Advancement towards greater security and development continues to be hampered by an array of challenges, including mass displacements due to armed conflict and natural disasters, gender inequality, limited access to basic goods and services, poor infrastructure, worsening food insecurity, and pervasive poverty. Since 2015, the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security has been working with security sector actors, government ministries and civil society organizations in the DRC to prevent children from being recruited and used in conflict. We are the only international non-governmental organization (INGO) that conducts child-centered, scenario-based trainings that integrate gender-responsive prevention measures into security sector doctrine in the DRC.

To respond to ongoing challenges, in particular the surge of armed conflict in the DRC and resulting violations against children in the country, the Dallaire Institute aims to enhance the capacity of the security sector, civil society (particularly women's civil society organizations (CSOs)), and the media to properly understand how children's rights are being violated and what their protection needs as well as the gendered aspects of recruitment and use of children. Using this information, the Dallaire Institute then helps implement locally-driven, gender-responsive measures to address some of these challenges at a community level.

ACTIONS

POLICY GUIDANCE To prevent recruitment and use of children in armed violence through integration in domestic law and security sector doctrine.

ADVOCACY To increase awareness and political will to make children the heart of international peace and security.

CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAMMING To strengthen security institutions operational effectiveness to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence.

ENGAGE CHILDREN AND COMMUNITIES On early warning, strategies to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence, and to improve dialogue with the security sector.

OUR KEY ACTIONS AT A GLANCE

The Dallaire Institute continues to work with key partners in the DRC to advocate for the implementation of the Vancouver Principles (VPs) on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers across the Congolese security sector (military and police), which includes creating national action plans that are accessible to the appropriate ministries. Increasing policy-maker awareness of the specific impacts of recruitment and use in the DRC coupled with a plan to successfully implement the VPs can contribute to preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and violence, improving broader child protection efforts, countering violent extremism in youth, and ultimately interrupting intergenerational cycles of violence and achieving sustainable peace and security.
Through our partnerships with the FARDC General Command of Military Education (CGEM) as well as the Services d'Education Civique, Patriotique et d'Actions Sociales (SECAS) --the training wing of the FARDC – we develop training doctrine and have created a working group within the Congolese security sector to oversee the development of policies, training and provision of technical support to develop Child Protection Focal Points within the security sector .Through dialogues with security sector actors and members of communities, we integrate the voices of communities, in particular those of women and children, into security sector doctrine and operations.

KEY MILESTONES

Since March 2020:

- **18** MONUSCO military trainers, including representatives from the IMTC and child protection office completed the Dallaire Institute's Foundations Training Course on how to prevent the recruitment and use of children;
- **165** FARDC military personnel successfully completed the Dallaire Institute's Foundations Training Course on how to prevent the recruitment and use of children;
- **20** FARDC military trainers completed the Dallaire Institute's Foundation for National Trainers Course;
- High-level advocacy with the Congolese authorities resulting in the government officially endorsing the Vancouver Principles.

UPCOMING MILESTONES

- Sustained advocacy on national and provincial bodies on the importance of preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed violence and promoting the Children, Peace, and Security Agenda
- Establishment of a network of French-speaking trainers to lead and advocate on the prevention of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security visit us at:

in The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace & Security

Twitter @DallaireInst

f The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace & Security

Instagram @dallaireinstitute

OUR WORK ON SECURITY SECTOR REFORM IN DRC

Through the Dallaire Institute and the UN Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO), FARDC training institutions have been able to amend their code of conduct to include specific child protection provisions, in particular on preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. The Dallaire Institute has been listed as one of the key players to consult as the DRC, through the national coordination mechanism, elaborates a Strategic Partnership Framework on Security Sector Reform.

"Understanding that the role we all play in advancing SSR in DRC jointly, is crucial to ensuring that all actions to SSR are appropriate and align with national priorities" Uju, Chief Security Sector Reform Section, MONUSCO

As a result of the Dallaire Institute's advocacy efforts, the DRC government agreed to endorse the Vancouver Principles, signalling that the country is committed to preventing the recruitment and use of children in conflict.

· THANK YOU ·
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
FOR ENDORSING THE VANCOUVER PRINCIPLES
and joining us in taking a proactive stance on preventing child recruitment in the context of peacekeeping operations
Canada

Building off this critical milestone, the Dallaire Institute strengthened and expanded its key interventions in the DRC since 2021. By creating a pool of trained trainers in FARDC, we have strengthened the capacity of security sector actors to integrate key child protection considerations in the operational planning phase to prevent the recruitment and use of children in the Eastern Province of the DRC. Some training academies and schools have already started briefing new recruits on our training curriculum.