

FROM EARLY WARNING TO EARLY ACTION: PREVENTING THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN IN ARMED VIOLENCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research has shown that armed violence dramatically increases children's vulnerability to being recruited and used by armed groups. Exploiting children and exposing them to violence can increase the likelihood that they will engage in violent behavior in the future. Preventing recruitment and use in the first place is therefore paramount to breaking cycles of violence and improving the protection of children and communities in fragile and vulnerable environments. Effective prevention requires timely, reliable, and systematic data on what makes children susceptible to recruitment and use. Even though the recruitment and use of children is a distinguishing factor of modern conflicts, there are currently no early warning systems that include child-centered indicators that precede recruitment and use.

To address this gap, the Dallaire Institute's Knowledge for Prevention (K4P) research project, has created the first early warning predictive model that helps identify combinations of factors that increase (or decrease) the likelihood that children are recruited and used. Understanding these factors, and how they interact with one another, remains key to developing timely and collaborative early action to prevent conflict escalation, inform conflict mitigation and improve child protection mechanisms.



OUR PREDICTIVE MODELLING PROCESS AT A GLANCE

Our research team has created a data set on the recruitment and use of children that allows us to:

- Identify global patterns in recruitment and use;
- Identify the factors that increase (or decrease) the likelihood of recruitment and use;
- Identify where recruitment and use is most likely to occur in the near future.

The Dallaire Institute is aware of how quickly armed conflict can change. As new threats emerge, armed groups may change their structures, strategies, and tactics. As a result, available data is also changing rapidly. Our predictive model is therefore designed to be adaptive yet reliable. Our research team updates the data set annually and as a result our predictive model is continually refined.

As our researchers strengthen the predictive model, the Dallaire Institute's capacity to prevent recruitment and use increases. As we become aware of early warning signals, we engage with key in-country experts to validate or repudiate our concerns. If our concerns are validated, we work with key partners to identify viable response pathways to prevent the recruitment and use of children.

KEY MILESTONES

Since September 2021:

- **103** Mozambican military personnel (male and female) successfully completed the Dallaire Institute's Foundations Training Course on how to prevent the recruitment and use of children;
- **33** Child Protection Focal Points were trained on how to monitor and report on grave violations against children to strengthen their capacity to prevent these violations from occurring;
- **29** Mozambican military trainers completed the Dallaire Institute's Foundation for National Trainers Course.

NEXT STEPS

- To advance our prevention impact, we are currently in the process of integrating our predictive model into a comprehensive early warning to early action (EW2EA) system.
- Our team of researchers and data scientists are in the process of developing an Early Action Pathways Tool that will enable us to translate early warning into early action by working with key partners to identify viable response pathways to prevent the recruitment and use of children.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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

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APPLYING EARLY WARNING TO EARLY ACTION IN MOZAMBIQUE: THE CASE OF CABO DELGADO

In January 2020, the first version of our predictive model predicted a very high probability of recruitment and use in Cabo Delgado, a province in northern Mozambique. As a result, and based on our early warning to early action process, our research team engaged with experts on the region and confirmed that there was evidence of recruitment and use by the militant group Ahlu-Sunnah wal Jama'a (ASWJ) in Cabo Delgado.

Through our advocacy efforts, a tripartite agreement between the Dallaire Institute, UNICEF and the Ministry of Defence in Mozambique was signed in September 2021. With support from our strategic partners, the Dallaire Institute began training the Mozambican Defence Forces (FADM) on how to prevent grave violations against children. By creating

Child Protection Focal Points in FADM, we have strengthened the capacity of security sector actors to intervene early to prevent the recruitment and use of children in Cabo Delgado.

