



PERMANENT MISSION OF GREECE
TO THE UNITED NATIONS



**UNSC Arria Formula Meeting on
Red Hand Day 2026:
Safe Education to Prevent the Recruitment and Use of Children in Armed Conflict
24 February 2026**

Remarks delivered by
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Thank you Chair.

Greece supports Panama's initiative to convene this meeting on the safe education as a strategic tool to prevent recruitment and use of children in armed conflict and to support their reintegration.

I would also like to thank the briefers for their valuable insights, and reaffirm Greece's full support for the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, as well as for the indispensable work of UNICEF and UNESCO.

Twenty-four years after its designation, the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers remains relevant, reminding us of a painful truth: as we speak, thousands of children are recruited and used in armed conflicts.

Reintegration is not only essential for the children themselves. It is also a core component of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, inclusive societies, social cohesion and development. In this context, safe education is not only a right; it is a strategic investment in peace and security. Yet, in situations of armed conflict, children are deprived of this right. When educational facilities are attacked, used for military purposes or destroyed, children lose not only access to learning, but also a protective framework that offers stability and psycho-social support.

Out-of-school children are exposed to many risks, including recruitment, abduction sexual and gender-based violence. Prolonged exposure to violence and disruption of education at critical stages of development has long-term impact on mental health, cognitive development and the overall well-being of children, especially for children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

Safe education in conflict and post-conflict settings must go beyond access to schooling. Quality, inclusive education can play a transformative role in healing trauma, strengthening social bonds, restoring a sense of normalcy and breaking further cycles of violence, stigma and marginalization.

In this regard, practical action is required. This includes endorsing and implementing the Safe Schools Declaration, integrating education into humanitarian and peacebuilding responses, developing of comprehensive strategies to prevent and respond to attacks on education, strengthening of the monitoring and reporting on attacks on education, ensuring long-term gender and age-sensitive and disability-inclusive support and protection to victims and survivors of attacks on education, facilitating the re-integration of children who have been forced out of school, addressing the disproportionate impact of education disruption on girls, securing adequate funding to create welcoming, safe, and inclusive learning spaces.

We wish to highlight also the role of the Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting, which lead the formal Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism in the collection of timely, accurate, objective and reliable information on attacks against educational facilities.

In conclusion, Mr. Chair,

Every school that remains open in times of armed conflict is an investment in peace. Every child who returns to the classroom is a step away from recruitment. Safe, inclusive, and continuous quality education must be placed at the center of our efforts to prevent recruitment and support reintegration. We must ensure that multilateralism can foster protection even in a complex global landscape because education is prevention, education is protection, education is, ultimately, peace.

I thank you.