



ICRC

ADVISORY SERVICE

ON INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN LAW

PROGRAMME

**Children Associated with Armed Forces or
Armed Groups:**

**Implementation of International Norms
on the Recruitment and Participation of
Children in Armed Conflict**

7-9 December 2009

Organized by the International Committee of the Red Cross

Venue: RAMADA PARK HOTEL GENEVA
75-77 Av. Louis-Casali
CH – 1216 Genève
Telephone : +41 22 710 30 00

Day one – Monday 7 December 2009

Morning

8.15 – 9.30 Registration of participants

9.30 – 10.30 Opening and inaugural address (Dr Knut Doermann, Head of the Legal Division, ICRC)

General overview, international legal framework and national implementation obligations

Presentations and discussions in plenary

Y General overview of the phenomenon of the recruitment of children and their use in hostilities (UNICEF – Ms Pernille Ironside)

10.30 – 10.45 COFFEE BREAK

10.45 – 12.30

Y The international legal framework, customary and conventional, applicable to the prohibition and repression of recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups in international and non-international armed conflicts. (ICRC – Mr Sylvain Vité)

Y The obligations of the Optional Protocol of 25 May 2000 to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the challenges related to its implementation. (UNCRC – Mr Kamel Filali)

12.30 – 14.00 LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon

Implementation of concrete measures in domestic legislations

	In plenary
14.00 – 14.15	Brief introduction to the Working Groups
14.15 – 16.00	Working groups
<u>Theme 1:</u>	Legislative and practical measures to prohibit and prevent unlawful recruitment and participation in hostilities
<u>Theme 2:</u>	Minimum age for compulsory and voluntary recruitment, the recruitment process and the minimum safeguards
<u>Theme 3:</u>	Judicial guarantees for children accused of crimes under international or national law committed during armed conflicts while associated with armed forces or armed groups and related sentencing issues
16.00 – 16.30	COFFEE BREAK
16.30 – 17.45	In plenary
	Group presentations and general discussions
18.00 - 19.00	COCKTAIL IN THE FOYER OF RAMADA PARK HOTEL GENEVA



Day two – Tuesday 8 December 2009

The repression of the violations of applicable international law relating to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict

Morning

9.00 – 10.30 Presentations and discussions in plenary

- Y Repression in national law of the recruitment and participation of children in armed conflict (Ms Liana Hattingh, Department of International Relations and Cooperation, South Africa)
- Y Enforcement of the individual criminal responsibility of recruiters and commanders before international tribunals (ICC – Mr Rod Rastan)

10.30 – 10.45 COFFEE BREAK

10.45 – 12.30

- Y Criminal responsibility of children who commit international crimes, and the role of non-judicial mechanisms of traditional justice (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, system of reparations, traditional rituals. (ICTJ – Ms Cecile Aptel)
- Y Protection of the rights of children as perpetrators, victims or witnesses of violations, including the participation of children at different stages in the judicial process (University of Hull, UK – Mr Matthew Happold)
- Y Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration programs in post-conflict situations (UN-DPKO – Ms Ilene Cohn)

12.30 – 14.00 LUNCH BREAK

Afternoon

In plenary

14.00 – 14.15 Brief introduction to the Working Groups

14.15 – 16.00 Working groups

Theme 4: Repression encompassed in national legislation of the crimes of recruitment and participation of children in hostilities by state armed forces and non-state armed groups. Transitional justice mechanisms and local justice initiatives. Reparation

Theme 5: Minimum age of criminal responsibility, accountability of children having committed serious crimes and alternatives to punishment

Theme 6: Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs in post-conflict situations: from family links restoration to asylum and refugee procedures for former children associated with armed forces or armed groups

16.00 – 16.30 COFFEE BREAK

16.30 – 18.15 In plenary

Group presentations and general discussions

18.50 – 19.30 Shuttle bus

19.30 Dinner at BRASSERIE DES HALLES DE L'ÎLE
Place de L'Île 1
CH-1204 Genève
+41 22 311 08 88
buffets@brasserieshallesdelile.ch



Day three – Wednesday 9 December 2009

International cooperation and mobilization – What action for the future?

Morning

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| 9.00 – 10.15 | Discussion in Plenary |
| | What are the main challenges that States face in implementing relevant treaties at national level? |
| | Should the Guiding Principles focus only on States obligations or also address those of armed groups? If yes, what areas should be covered? |
| 10.15 – 10.30 | COFFEE BREAK |
| | Panel Discussion |
| 10.30 – 11.15 | International cooperation and assistance for children victims of armed conflicts |
| | o Dr. Rod Rastan, ICC |
| | o European Union Commission TBC |
| 11.15 – 11.45 | What domestic law do you currently have dealing with children in armed conflicts? |
| Y | Presentation on the ICRC National Implementation Database (Len Blazeby and Gabriel Chavez Tafur, ICRC) |
| 11.45 – 12.15 | Conclusions and follow-up: What action for the future? (Knut Doermann, Head of the Legal Division, ICRC) |
| 12.15 – 13.30 | LUNCH |

