

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the sixteenth annual FUMUN Conference. My name is Mahfouz Soumare and I will be serving as the Chair of Children, not Soldiers Crisis Committee. I am currently a sophomore with a triple major in Economics, International Studies and Film Tv. I'm really excited for all of you to attend this incredible event where you will not only fine tune your skills of public speaking and debate while immersing yourself in cultural studies and current global issues but you will also challenge yourself and your peers in ways you never imagined.

The topic that I plan to address in this committee is the children, not soldier crisis. Throughout my life I have been exposed to many of the similar issues that the soldier children are facing on a daily basis. I was born in the Ivory Coast, a country that has been affected by civil war. During the civil war, my friends and I were fighting, shooting and had to carry an AK47 nearly our weight . Due to this, I lost a lot of my friends. Following this, my mother made me move to Mali which was also a country ridden by conflict. Because of my life struggles, I really feel as if I can truly empathize with these children . At FUMUN we are going to represent and be the voice of these children and try to find the best solution to this long term problem. In my country during the civil war children were not forced to be soldiers, children like me had a choice to have a weapon because it was for your own safety. However Fifty countries still allow children to be recruited into armed forces, according to Child Soldiers International. Many non-state armed groups also recruit children.

The UN Secretary-General's annual "name and shame" list for 2017 highlighted the armed forces of Afghanistan, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen for recruiting and using under-18s for armed conflict. But non-state armed groups also recruit children in these and other countries. The report said there were at least 4000 verified violations by government forces and over 11,500 by non-state armed groups in the 20 country situations it examined.

This topic is sometimes avoided globally, leaders at the UN tend to focus on others crisis. While it is difficult to address the internal dynamics, we can and will seek to address the issues of foreign countries involvement. Moreover, we will be concentrated on the United Nation. The goal of this committee is to observe the crisis politically and internationally. Upon making this observation delegates will be charged with developing solutions to this discrimination issue. In developing these resolutions, delegates should consider political, economic, and social components.

My goal is to challenge delegates to extend their thought process beyond the singular issue of resolving this issue and avoiding the death of millions of children. This crisis has existed

for nearly a decade and it is time we support in finding a solution to resolve this issue. I look forward to hearing the opinions and solutions that delegates prepare for our committee discussion. Delegates can contact me at any time prior to the committee with questions in regards to the topic, conference, or parliamentary procedure. I look forward to hosting this committee.

Sincerely,

Mahfouz Soumare

mahfouz.soumare@student.fairfield.edu