

**STATEMENT**

***at the international conference  
“Protecting Children in Armed Conflict”,  
Oslo, Norway 5 - 6 June 2023, delivered  
by Dmitry Mironchik, Ambassador  
of Belarus to Sweden and Norway***

Thank you, Mr. Moderator.

Excellencies and distinguished participants,

The plight of children in armed conflict is indeed one of the most pressing humanitarian issues of our time. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, some 55 countries are now involved in armed conflict, up from 30 in 2010.

The pain of every child is understood and shared by the citizens of Belarus, which lost one in three of its population to the Nazi genocide during the Second World War.

Our country is strongly committed to humanitarian action in order to minimise the impact of armed conflict on children. A well-developed national health system and an extensive network of children's recreation centres have become the basis of our efforts to provide remedial protection for children.

In 2011, Belarus hosted groups of children for recreation and medical rehabilitation for the first time. They were kids from Japan affected by Fukushima. Starting in 2016, they were followed by those affected by the armed conflicts in Ukraine and Syria.

This work has never stopped since. It is purely humanitarian in nature. We focus on children's health, safety and well-being. After the Chernobyl accident, hundreds of thousands of Belarusian kids travelled abroad for rehabilitation and recuperation. Through decades of Chernobyl programmes, we have learned how to avoid problematic situations, legal claims and family dramas.

The temporary arrival of children for rehabilitation in Belarus follows strict procedures. All kids enter and leave Belarus legally, accompanied by their parents or legal guardians and with all the necessary documents. We do this openly and transparently, including in cooperation with international organisations and UN funds such as UNICEF and the Red and Cross.

For example, in August 2022, 87 children from Ukraine aged 6 to 17 were treated in Belarus with UNICEF financial support as part of the project "Humanitarian assistance for refugee children from Ukraine in summer: organization of rehabilitation and preparation for the school year".

This summer, Belarus' national children's education and recreation centre, Zubrenok, will host 225 kids from Syria. In total, this national centre alone has received over 12,000 children from 42 countries between 2013 and 2022.

Belarus will continue and intensify its efforts to provide assistance to children who are victims of armed conflict. We will do so in a responsible and transparent manner, in accordance with relevant international and national legal norms.

Thank you.