

EN

E-001425/2026

Answer given by High Representative/Vice-President Kallas
on behalf of the European Commission
(11.5.2026)

The EU has been vocal in condemning the recruitment and use of children by armed groups in Colombia and has called on armed actors to respect international humanitarian law, most recently in response to the National Liberation Army (ELN)'s¹ campaign of violence in Catatumbo in January 2025. This issue also features regularly on the agenda of the EU-Colombia high level Dialogue on Human Rights.

As part of the Group of Friends of Resolution 1612, the EU coordinates with UN International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and other Embassies advocacy actions aimed at protecting children in armed conflicts. Embassies engage in dialogue with state entities and issue public pronouncements condemning the practice and calling for respect for international humanitarian law.

The EU supports several peace dialogues under Colombia's 'Total Peace' policy, promoting agreements with armed groups to end the recruitment of minors. While multiple agreements have been reached, their implementation and monitoring remain insufficient, and the EU continues to raise these concerns with Colombian authorities.

EU funded projects provide child protection services, including mental health and psychosocial support, for children affected by conflict, including victims of recruitment, with a focus on Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. The EU supports partners such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva Call and UNICEF to promote respect for International Humanitarian Law.

¹ Ejército de Liberación Nacional – ELN.