



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

Distr.: General  
7 December 2022  
English  
Original: French  
English, French and Spanish only

---

Committee on the Rights of the Child

## Report submitted by Senegal under article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, due in 2006<sup>\*</sup>, <sup>\*\*</sup>

[Date received: 23 September 2016]

---

\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

\*\* The annexes to the present document are available on the Committee's web page.



## Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Introduction .....	3
General information about Senegal .....	3
Preparation of the report (methodology) .....	3
International commitments and scope of the report .....	4
Context and challenges of the conflict in Casamance .....	4
Section I: General measures of implementation of the Optional Protocol.....	6
I. Legal status of the Optional Protocol in the internal law of Senegal (art. 5).....	6
II. Implementation of the Optional Protocol with respect to persons subject to the internal law of Senegal and challenges in that regard .....	7
A. Actors concerned by the implementation of the Optional Protocol .....	7
B. Peace and ceasefire agreements between the Government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (art. 4) .....	9
C. Challenges in the implementation of the Optional Protocol .....	9
Section II: Prevention of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict .....	10
I. Procedure for enlisting in the army .....	10
II. Recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups.....	10
III. Role of non-State actors .....	11
Section III: Other measures of implementation of the Optional Protocol .....	11
I. Protection of and assistance for child victims (awareness-raising campaigns, international cooperation programmes, psychological assistance).....	11
A. Reconstruction of basic social infrastructure .....	11
B. Awareness-raising and psychosocial support for victims .....	12
C. Access to education and health care .....	13
D. Mine clearance and assistance for survivors.....	16
E. Tackling school dropout .....	16
F. Birth registration .....	17
II. Major challenges and prospects for the future .....	17
Conclusion.....	17

## Introduction

### General information about Senegal

1. Senegal is situated in the westernmost part of the African continent, on the Atlantic Ocean, where Europe, Africa and the Americas converge and at the crossroads of major air and shipping routes. Covering an area of approximately 196,722 km<sup>2</sup>, it is bordered to the north by Mauritania, to the east by Mali, to the south by Guinea and Guinea-Bissau and to the west by the Gambia and an Atlantic coastline stretching over 700 km.

- Population in 2014: 13,508,713 inhabitants (source: National Agency for Statistics and Demography)
- Density (number of inhabitants/km<sup>2</sup>) in 2014: 70.8
- Total female population in 2014: 6,445,412
- Total male population in 2014: 6,428,198

*Some key indicators:*

- Gross domestic product (GDP) (Q3 2013): + 4.1 per cent
- GDP (2012): 7,172 billion
- GDP per capita (2012): 598,212 CFAF
- Growth rate (2012): 3.4 per cent
- Rate of inflation (2013): + 0.7 per cent
- Poverty rate (Poverty Monitoring Survey 2011): 46.7 per cent
- Human Development Index (2012) (Report of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)): 0.47
- Literacy rate (Poverty Monitoring Survey 2011): 52.1 per cent
- Literacy rate among men (Poverty Monitoring Survey 2011): 66.3 per cent
- Literacy rate among women (Poverty Monitoring Survey 2011): 40.4 per cent

### Preparation of the report (methodology)

2. This initial report was drafted following a long process of qualitative and quantitative data collection and exchanges with stakeholders in the implementation of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The drafting process was preceded by a documentary review. Data on comparative impact indicators related to school attendance in Dakar and the three southern regions of the country affected by the crisis were provided by the Ministry of Education.

3. The report was prepared following a participatory and inclusive approach that involved stakeholders working in the field, the national armed forces and the member bodies of a steering committee composed of representatives of several ministries and civil society organizations involved in the protection of children and vulnerable persons.

4. Preparation of the report began with the establishment of the steering committee by the Directorate for the Rights and Protection of Children and Vulnerable Groups of the Ministry for Women, the Family and Children, which oversaw the process.

5. The following organizations and structures based in Dakar and Ziguinchor were consulted prior to the drafting of the report: the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Africare, Afrik Enjeux, ENDA, Handicap International, the Red Cross, Rencontre africaine pour la défense des droits de l'homme, Plateforme des femmes pour la paix en Casamance, Réseau Dynamique de Paix en Casamance, the Study Group on Peace in Casamance, the Governor of Ziguinchor, army and gendarmerie commanders posted to Military Zone No. 5 in

Ziguinchor, the Directorate for Supervised Education and Social Protection and the Directorate for Army Information and Public Relations.

6. Dakar and Ziguinchor were chosen as areas of study because almost all State and non-State actors involved in addressing the crisis and its consequences, in the psychosocial rehabilitation of children and in the socioeconomic reconstruction of the natural region of Casamance are active in these two areas. Another factor in this decision was that the camps where armed groups are stationed and the areas surrounding those camps are inaccessible for security reasons and, most significantly, because access thereto was denied by the armed groups.

7. The initial report was thus drafted within the framework of a collective consultation process involving all of the above-mentioned actors, in particular the steering committee, which oversaw the appointment of a consultant to produce the draft and final version of the report, in collaboration with partners.

8. The draft report was prepared in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child and shared with the steering committee for comments and suggestions. A workshop to approve the final report was held at the end of the process, bringing together the members of the steering committee as well as other State and non-State actors, some of which had not previously been involved in the consultations.

### **International commitments and scope of the report**

9. Having ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child on 31 July 1990 and its Optional Protocols in August 2003, the State of Senegal submits the present report to the Committee on the Rights of the Child pursuant to article 8 (1) of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

10. Senegal has signed and ratified other international instruments, including the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182), of the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Treaty), the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and other instruments for the protection of civilian populations, in keeping with the State's ongoing efforts to contribute to the establishment of just and lasting peace throughout the world and at home.

11. The main goal of this initial report is to assess the implementation of the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict. The scope of this assessment will be limited to the conflict in Casamance, since all other regions of Senegal are peaceful; a field survey of State and non-State actors was used as the basis of the report.

12. First, the report will analyse the historical, socioeconomic and political context of the situation of children in areas affected by armed conflict, before focusing on their involvement in the conflict itself. It will then discuss the framework for the implementation of the Optional Protocol, the progress made and the obstacles and difficulties encountered in that regard. Lastly, the report will identify challenges to be met and some prospects for the future, all with the aim of better implementing the Optional Protocol and the primary goal of effectively and efficiently protecting the rights of children in armed conflict zones.

### **Context and challenges of the conflict in Casamance**

#### **Historical and political aspects of the conflict**

13. For over 30 years, conflict has been waged in southern Senegal, in the natural region of Casamance, which extends over an area of 28,350 km<sup>2</sup>, covering 14.4 per cent of the national territory. Casamance is composed of three administrative districts: Kolda, Sédhiou and Ziguinchor.

14. Casamance is a historical and natural region located in southwest Senegal, between the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. It takes its name from the Casamance River. Its inhabitants are referred to as "*casamançais*".

15. The city of Ziguinchor – the most important in the area because it was the former regional capital of Casamance before the region was split into three districts – was founded by the Portuguese in 1645; it later came under French control pursuant to an agreement between France and Portugal signed on 12 May 1886.

16. Several factors contributed to the outbreak of the conflict, which had been simmering for a long time before the commencement of hostilities by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance on 26 December 1983 and the establishment of its armed wing, Atika, named after the procession mentioned below, which had taken place exactly one year earlier, on 26 December 1982.

17. The physical isolation of Casamance from the rest of Senegal and its inhabitants' feeling of social isolation from the northern parts of the country, particularly the capital city of Dakar, apparently led to frustration among parts of the Casamance population.

18. On 26 December 1982, the leaders of the independence movement organized a procession calling for the replacement of the Senegalese flag at the local government office with the flag of the movement, to protest the arrest, the previous day, of the historic leader of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, Father Diamacoune Senghor.

19. The procession, which featured a large concentration of women in its front ranks, was dispersed by the law enforcement authorities but is nonetheless remembered by the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance as the event that marked the beginning of the rebellion.

20. The conflict was marked by periods of intense fighting between 1983 and 1998, during which hundreds of persons were killed or had limbs amputated by anti-personnel mines; according to Handicap International, there were more than 800 mine victims, the majority of whom were women and children.

21. The conflict has caused socioeconomic disruption and the internal displacement of thousands of people in Casamance, with thousands more forced to seek refuge in the Gambia or Guinea-Bissau. It has also resulted in general insecurity, with clashes between fighters, armed robberies and the presence of mines and other unexploded ordnance, which undermines the prospect of economic and social development, especially in the agricultural sector.

22. Most basic social infrastructure, i.e., schools, health clinics and roads, has been destroyed and many villages have been abandoned by their inhabitants because of the armed conflict. UNICEF estimates that, between the outbreak of the conflict in 1982 and 2000, when the organization's report on the conflict was published, 231 villages were abandoned and 60,000 people, including 5,000 students and 200 teachers, were displaced and forced to settle in Ziguinchor.

23. The conflict between the State and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance is currently in a period of relative calm, although sporadic attacks on and robberies of traders and travellers by members of the independence movement and simple criminals continue. These attacks provide members of the independence movement with supplies that allow them to continue to survive in the maquis.

24. However, over the past 10 years, many families have returned to formerly abandoned villages that have been rebuilt with assistance from the State through the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance, which was established in July 2004.

#### **Sociocultural aspects of the crisis**

25. The people of Casamance, especially the Diola people, to which belong the founders and current leaders of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, are strongly committed to the principle of honour and push back against even the slightest hint of subjugation or exploitation. This is why the leaders of the independence movement sealed a blood pact in the sacred forest before the outbreak of the armed conflict. Initiation ceremonies are periodically organized in the forest, where young Diola go on retreat for days at a time during the transition from adolescence to adulthood. During these learning ceremonies, positive cultural values such as courage, dignity, honour and the importance of fulfilling

commitments are instilled in the initiates. Women are the custodians of these cultural traditions and contribute effectively to their success by preparing meals for the initiates and their guides. It is no coincidence that Queen Aline Sitoe Diatta, at the young age of 20, led a resistance movement against the imposition of taxes by the French colonists. This led to her deportation by the French to Timbuktu, Mali, in 1943, where she died shortly after.

### **Socioeconomic aspects of the crisis**

26. With the introduction of Chinese rice cultivation techniques between 1950 and 1970, rice fields were planted on vast tracts of land in the valley of the lower Casamance, once known as “the granary of Senegal”. Alongside rice cultivation, wild forest cashew harvesting became prominent. The wood of *vène* trees and mangroves, in which various halieutic resources can be found, also form part of the abundant natural resources of Casamance.

27. In the 1970s, during the great drought, the region became the destination of large migratory flows from the groundnut basin in the centre of the country and from the northern territories, which had been hit hard by the lack of rain.

28. This non-native population, fleeing their drier lands to settle in the resource-rich valleys of Casamance and exploit the forests of this greener region, are considered usurpers by the local population, particularly by the Diola ethnic group, which remains the most resolutely oppositional group and from which hail the majority of rebels and their leaders.

29. Because of the insecure situation in Casamance, forest resources such as cashew nuts and water lemons are no longer properly harvested and processed.

30. All sectors of social and economic life in Casamance have been affected by the conflict. This situation has exacerbated poverty because of the negative impact of the crisis on the most economically vulnerable groups, namely women and children.

31. One of the consequences of the conflict for children is that many of them were uprooted by their families in the flight to neighbouring countries, which meant that their schooling was disrupted by their having to adapt to new curricula. In addition, these curricula are taught in new or unfamiliar foreign languages, such as Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau and English in the Gambia. Many of these children, unable to adapt, have been forced to drop out of school or learn a trade as an alternative to idling on the streets of the host country.

32. The unavailability of resources resulting from the inaccessibility of fields and forests in risk zones, which renders agricultural and gathering activities almost impossible, prevents many families from providing their children with a proper education.

33. Consequently, many young people have dropped out of school and fallen into debauchery or drug use and/or dealing. Some aimless adolescent girls even engage in clandestine prostitution as a survival strategy. The number of children who find themselves in street situations because of the conflict is particularly high in Ziguinchor.

34. Orphans in the care of foster families in Ziguinchor and children from poor families face serious problems in terms of social integration and education. Many of them are traumatized, according to the National Red Cross, which provides psychosocial and educational support in cooperation with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as ENDA, Africare and Afrik Enjeux, in collaboration with technical and financial partners.

## **Section I: General measures of implementation of the Optional Protocol**

### **I. Legal status of the Optional Protocol in the internal law of Senegal (art. 5)**

35. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict was ratified by the President of the Republic on 3 March 2004, upon authorization by the National Assembly, which, at its session of 2 September 2003, unanimously adopted bill No. 2003-30.

36. The President enacted bill No. 2003-30 into law; the text of the law reads as follows:

Sole article – The President of the Republic is authorized to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, adopted in New York on 25 May 2000.

37. The following international legal instruments signed and ratified by Senegal also contribute to greater protection of children and of civilian populations in general and in particular those living in conflict zones:

- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- ILO Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999 (No. 182)
- Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (Ottawa Treaty), 1987
- African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
- The four Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols thereto
- Harmonization of national law with the Optional Protocol

38. The harmonization of national law with the Optional Protocol and other international legal instruments ratified by Senegal is still under way. Nonetheless, the Senegalese regulatory framework is in line with the primary goal of the Optional Protocol, i.e., the non-involvement of children in armed conflict. Violations of international conventions are punished under the Criminal Code or the Family Code, depending on the nature of the crime or offence committed.

39. In order to clear up any ambiguity, however, the harmonization of the new Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure with the international instruments in force for Senegal is under way, with the participation of all State actors concerned, in particular the respective supervising ministries. Work is also under way on a children's code, which will incorporate the provisions of all national and international instruments for the protection of children's rights in Senegal (see the Optional Protocol, art. 6 (1) and (2)).

## **II. Implementation of the Optional Protocol with respect to persons subject to the internal law of Senegal and challenges in that regard**

### **A. Actors concerned by the implementation of the Optional Protocol**

#### **1. Senegalese National Army**

40. The minimum age for recruitment to the army is 18 years, in accordance with article 3 (1) of the Optional Protocol.

41. The minimum age for admission to the only civilian-military school in Senegal, the Prytanée Military School, varies between 11 and 13 years of age, based on the results of an entrance examination. The education provided in the civilian-military school is identical to that provided in general lower secondary schools up to the fourth year, except that students are expected to follow the rules of conduct and respect for hierarchy and military discipline in place in the army. From the fifth year of studies, which corresponds to the first year of regular upper secondary schooling, students receive vocational training as soldiers and are taught combat techniques.

42. The education provided at the Prytanée Military School is certified by the baccalaureate, which allows alumni to continue their studies in a higher education establishment. Continuation in a military career is voluntary and subject to excellent performance and discipline. The sanctions applicable to undisciplined students are imposed in accordance with the general disciplinary regulations in force in the army, with strict respect for the physical and moral integrity of the human person.

43. In addition to this subregional African military training school, there exist other training facilities for senior and non-commissioned army officers, including the Military Medical School, the National School for Non-Commissioned Officers on Active Duty and the National School for Commissioned Officers on Active Duty, which accept students on the basis of both general and career-specific entrance examinations. There are also other institutions that offer specialized and advanced training.

44. These institutions are: the Thiès Infantry Training School; the Air Force Training School; the Military Health-Care Services Training School, which offers complementary practical training for doctors graduating from the Military Medical School; and the Centre for Vocational Training in Civilian Occupations, which was established for soldiers who decide not to pursue a military career, in order to ensure that they have a professional qualification before their demobilization and thereby facilitate their reintegration into the civilian population.

45. Although the National Army and the various services of the security forces have been recruiting women for several years, only two of the seven training schools listed have female students, namely the Military Medical School and the National School for Non-Commissioned Officers on Active Duty.

Table 1

**Enrolment in armed forces training facilities and admission requirements (2013/14)**

<i>Training facility</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
1. Saint-Louis Prytanée Military School (competitive examination open to students in the fifth grade (CM2))	485	-	485, including 15 foreigners
2. Military Medical School (competitive examination open to baccalaureate graduates with a science major)	155	59	214, including 46 foreigners
3. National School for Commissioned Officers on Active Duty, open to non-commissioned officers who have graduated from the National School for Non-Commissioned Officers on Active Duty after two years of active service	58	-	58, including 19 foreigners
4. National School for Non-Commissioned Officers on Active Duty, open to candidates with a baccalaureate or lower secondary certificate	122	10	132 including, 22 foreigners
5. Thiès Infantry Training School (for officers who have graduated from the National School for Commissioned Officers on Active Duty)	27	-	27 including, 15 foreigners
6. Military Health-Care Services Training School, based at the main hospital in Dakar, which trains doctors who have graduated from the Military Medical School			
7. Air Force Training School, which trains pilots and aircraft mechanics	50		50
8. Centre for the Advanced Training of Senior Officers, which offers professional training on a voluntary basis prior to demobilization		-	

46. The principles of humanitarian law, human rights and the rights of the child are taught at officer training schools to future senior military officials, who also take introductory courses in the social sciences and international law. Prior to the deployment of troops to peacekeeping operations, participants are trained to respect the rules of international engagement and to observe the laws, customs and practices of the host country.

**2. Armed groups (art. 4)**

47. While the Senegalese National Army strictly enforces the minimum age limit of 18 years for voluntary enlistment, which means that no person under that age may participate in



hostilities, in accordance with the Optional Protocol, the same has not always been true for armed groups.

48. Although the nature of guerrilla conflict makes less visible the use of child soldiers by armed groups in activities other than carrying stolen goods, credible independent stakeholders have attested to reports of their use as combatants in the past. If these reports are true, those responsible have committed a crime against humanity, as defined in the Optional Protocol, and could thus be held accountable before the International Criminal Court if their crimes were committed after the ratification of the Rome Statute by Senegal in 1998.

49. The Amnesty Act promulgated on 21 July 2004, six months prior to the signing of the peace agreement of 30 December 2004, could be a barrier to the prosecution of these crimes if they were committed during the time period covered by the Act. However, it is possible that there exists a conflict of law between the Rome Statute and the Amnesty Act, since, according to the principle of subsidiarity that governs the referral of cases to the International Criminal Court, if a State does not prosecute a crime, the Prosecutor of the Court may take up the case on his or her own initiative and open prosecution proceedings in accordance with the second principle established in the Rome Statute, namely the principle of complementarity.

50. It is precisely in order to establish a lasting peace, which is the best way to ensure respect for the Optional Protocol, that peace and security agreements were concluded by the warring parties.

## **B. Peace and ceasefire agreements between the Government of Senegal and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance (art. 4)**

51. While two ceasefires and one peace agreement have been concluded in the past, such agreements have rarely been respected for long by armed groups. The first ceasefire was agreed by the State and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance on 31 May 1991, eight years after the armed conflict was initiated by the independence movement on 26 December 1983. This ceasefire was violated not long after, and another was concluded two years later, on 8 July 1993. However, several clashes between the National Army and insurgents belonging to the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, which resulted in dozens of deaths between the date of the start of the second ceasefire and 1998, once again undermined the agreement.

52. It was not until 30 December 2004 that a peace agreement was concluded in Ziguinchor between the State and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance; in February 2005, a meeting was held in Foundiougne to define the terms of the agreement.

53. While it is true that since then there has been a relative lull in the fighting, sporadic attacks on travellers and traders by elements of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance and unidentified armed groups persist. These attacks are mostly motivated by the insurgents' need for supplies in order to survive in the maquis.

54. The death of the independence movement's historic charismatic leader, Father Diamacoune Senghor, in 2007, has sown division among the leadership of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance. This has complicated efforts to reach a final peace agreement. Hope remains, however, since the movement will soon be holding meetings involving its various branches in order to appoint a single leader to speak on its behalf and unite the leadership. Also within the framework of the peace process, the National Assembly adopted Amnesty Act No. 2004-20 of 21 July 2004 on 6 July 2004 to prepare the ground for the peace agreement concluded by the State and the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance in Ziguinchor on 30 December 2004.

## **C. Challenges in the implementation of the Optional Protocol**

55. There are challenges arising from several factors, notably:

- The impossibility of vehicle access to the bases of the various factions of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, which are located in dense forest areas bordering the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau and can be reached only by walking many kilometres from those countries. This makes it very difficult to monitor what goes on there, especially in terms of the recruitment of children
- The absence of a peace agreement signed by all parties to the conflict, which prevents the roll-out of a disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration programme for combatants and any children recruited by armed groups
- The limited scope of demining operations because of the ongoing conflict, which undermines efforts to ensure respect for the Optional Protocol and protect women and children, who fall victim to anti-personnel mines or unexploded ordnance more often than men. This limitation is due to the fact that, during demining negotiations, the armed groups restrict access to certain areas in order to protect themselves
- Insufficiently widespread awareness among armed groups and their families of the seriousness of the use of children in hostilities and the possible criminal penalties for perpetrators, because of a lack of direct contact with them

## **Section II: Prevention of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict**

### **I. Procedure for enlisting in the army**

56. The State adopted Decree No. 91-1173/PR/MFA of 7 November 1999 on the Rules for Recruitment into the Armed Forces. Only Senegalese citizens between the ages of 18 and 24 are eligible for recruitment to the armed forces.

57. Potential recruits are required to certify their age by providing a birth certificate. Enlistment is voluntary. Military service lasts 24 months. General mobilization may be decreed only in the event of war with another State; however, under no circumstances may a person under the age of 18 years be recruited to the armed forces.

58. Parental authorization is required only in respect of minors who wish to sit the entrance examination for the Prytanée Military School, as enlistment in the National Army is possible only for young adults between the ages of 18 and 24 years.

59. Incentives for potential recruits are the range of careers possible in the various branches of the armed forces and the training courses available upon enlistment.

60. Soldiers may be discharged in the event of serious misconduct or illness affecting their fitness. The fitness of potential recruits is tested and certified by a medical certificate issued by one of the recruitment commissions present throughout the country. The concept of the “Army-Nation”, which characterizes the Senegalese Army, figures prominently in recruitment campaigns. This concept prohibits discriminatory recruitment on the basis of ethnic, religious or regional affiliation.

### **II. Recruitment of child soldiers by armed groups**

61. According to field investigations involving interviews with local civilian authorities, the Commander of Military Zone No. 5, the Commander of the Ziguinchor Gendarmerie, staff of the regional office of UNICEF, notable figures, NGOs and NGO networks in the region, the recruitment of children has been very rare in the conflict.

62. According not only to the State, civilian and military authorities, but also to non-State actors, the use of children in the conflict is currently limited to the carrying of goods stolen from travellers and traders by insurgents from the site of the robbery to the rear base. Children involved in carrying stolen goods always return home as soon as the job is done. However, the “kidnapping” of children to carry stolen goods nonetheless amounts to their involvement in the conflict. Such involvement is strictly prohibited by the Optional Protocol and is

punishable by criminal sanctions (Optional Protocol, art. 4). The persons responsible for such reprehensible acts are not protected under the Amnesty Act adopted by the National Assembly in July 2004 if the acts were committed after the date of adoption of the Act.

63. The nature of the conflict between the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance and the State is different from that of conflicts in other areas, where the recruitment of child soldiers and the direct involvement of children in hostilities is highly visible. In Senegal, although there are some reports that children have been recruited by armed groups in the past, allegedly sometimes at the behest of their own mothers, it is difficult to prove that the practice continues to this day, because of the current lull in the hostilities and the desire of all parties to achieve a just and lasting peace. Moreover, the camps where armed groups are stationed are inaccessible to third parties.

### **III. Role of non-State actors**

64. Since 1999, UNICEF, as a strategic partner, has been training qualified professionals to provide psychosocial assistance to traumatized children and landmine survivors. An area office was opened in Ziguinchor to collect information on the situation of children in order to assess their needs in terms of high-quality education, survival and protection, and to identify children in need of special protection.

65. In addition to intergovernmental organizations and technical and financial partners, NGOs and grassroots associations are also doing remarkable work for vulnerable children affected by the crisis or otherwise at risk. There are also numerous organizations working on the ground to assist the State in the areas of education, health, civil status registration, social reintegration and assistance for mine and unexploded ordnance survivors and persons dealing with post-traumatic stress.

## **Section III: Other measures of implementation of the Optional Protocol**

### **I. Protection of and assistance for child victims (awareness-raising campaigns, international cooperation programmes, psychological assistance)**

66. In accordance with article 8, the State has taken legal and judicial measures to implement the Optional Protocol; in July 2004, it established the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance, which in turn developed the Programme to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance. The Programme is being implemented with the support of technical and financial partners including UNDP, UNICEF, the European Union, the World Bank and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). USAID funds many NGOs and associations working in the field. The German and Norwegian cooperation agencies are assisting the Senegal Mine Action Committee in demining operations.

#### **A. Reconstruction of basic social infrastructure**

67. The State's strategy in this area has been entrusted to the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance. It is centred on the following major areas:<sup>1</sup>

- Coordination of reconstruction activities in Casamance
- Construction or renovation of major social and economic public infrastructure in three main sectors: transportation, health and education

<sup>1</sup> Background information on the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance (extracts from a document produced by the Agency).

- Conversion of the region of Casamance into a pilot development pole, as part of the third phase of the decentralization programme, the primary aim of which is to foster development in Senegal at the regional level, away from the capital

*Selected results:*

- Opening/reopening by the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance of 141 classrooms, of which 44 were rebuilt and fitted out and 97 were renovated and fitted out, leading to a considerable increase in the number of students enrolled (return of children from displaced families, former refugees and children withdrawn from school by their parents) and to an improvement in school performance and greater motivation among all persons involved in education (parents, teachers and students)
- With regard to health infrastructure, the reconstruction and/or renovation of:
  - 25 health clinics
  - 25 maternity wards
  - 1 fully-equipped psychiatric care centre with its own ambulance

## **B. Awareness-raising and psychosocial support for victims**

68. As of January 2002, special training activities have been organized to assist 256 teachers suffering from physical and psychological trauma, specifically 203 in the Ziguinchor region and 53 in Bignona. A network of stress management activities has been established in five departments. As part of an awareness-raising campaign on anti-personnel mines, 1,000 audio cassettes featuring informational songs have been distributed and informational films have been screened.

69. The National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance has been collaborating with United Nations agencies, NGOs and civil society organizations on priority activities in the region including:

- Demobilization and reintegration of former combatants
- Social and economic reintegration of combatants and their families and of returnees and displaced persons

70. A special programme has been developed in collaboration with the Prefect of Ziguinchor, NGOs and national associations to address the problem of the education of vulnerable children without families, most of whom are located in Kolda, Medina Yoro Foulah and Sédhiou. School kits are being distributed to students living in the areas bordering the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau that have been most deeply affected by the armed conflict and poverty.

71. The Senegalese Red Cross plays a key role in preventing school dropout and in integration and reintegration activities. Children at risk of dropping out of school are provided with support in the form of capacity-building activities, in collaboration with school directors and the school-district authorities. Special training is organized for older students. The most vulnerable students are those living in poor neighbourhoods and conflict zones. The Senegalese Red Cross organizes vocational training for children from displaced families returning from Guinea-Bissau in order to train them up for careers as joiners and electricians or, if they are girls, as hairdressers. Twenty-five volunteers received training from the Senegalese Red Cross on children's rights, psychosocial care techniques and peacebuilding in difficult neighbourhoods.

72. The Red Cross has also set up a counselling room to identify children affected by the conflict, with a view to helping to restore family ties and reunite family members. The Red Cross is active in all villages, where it conducts awareness-raising campaigns on peace and anti-personnel mines.

73. NGOs including Africare, Afrik Enjeux, Handicap International, the International Committee of the Red Cross, Enda Tiers Monde and Réseau Dynamique de Paix are

supporting the State in the implementation of its psychosocial rehabilitation and social reintegration strategy for persons affected by the conflict, particularly children.

74. Africare, for example, runs a community health and training programme that offers support to children between the ages of 6 and 15 years, i.e., children of school age. According to its coordinator, Africare practises positive discrimination by distributing food and money to mine victims in conflict-afflicted areas in collaboration with the World Food Programme. Africare and Afrik Enjeux, which work with community-based organizations, are part of a consortium of seven NGOs funded by USAID.

75. The State has established a protection centre in Ziguinchor to provide shelter for children whose moral well-being is at risk as a result of their family's displacement, the death of their parents or their precarious situation. Children whose moral well-being is at risk may be placed in the centre pursuant to a judicial decision known as a temporary custody order, which must be issued by a judge; children receive vocational training once in the centre. Sometimes a child's parents will request the adoption of this protective measure by a judge.

## C. Access to education and health care

### 1. Access to education

76. The conflict has had a negative impact on children's education in general, since many schools have been destroyed and many families have been displaced to the city of Ziguinchor, which remains the safest place to live, and to the neighbouring countries of the Gambia and Guinea-Bissau. However, thanks to the proactive efforts of the State, through the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance, destroyed schools, villages, and health-care centres have been rebuilt over the past 10 years, making it possible for refugees and displaced persons to return to their places of origin.

77. This is why the figures shown in the tables below, which were provided by the Ziguinchor District Education Authority, are higher than the national average in terms of both gender parity and enrolment. The leaders of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance are currently supporting measures in the areas of education and health. In addition, a commander of the Northern Military Zone is calling for the wide-scale installation of school canteens, and another commander from the same zone has offered 3 million CFAF for the purchase of a scanner for Ziguinchor hospital.

Table 2  
School-age population in the Ziguinchor region, 2014

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
3–5 years	33 090	32 302	65 391
3–6 years	44 119	42 544	86 663
7 years	10 242	9 454	19 696
6–11 years	59 876	55 937	115 813
7–12 years	59 088	51 998	111 086
13 years	9 454	8 666	18 120
12–15 years	37 817	33 877	71 694
16–18 years	27 575	25 211	52 786
17–19 years	27 575	25 211	52 786

Table 3  
Enrolment by age group in the Ziguinchor region, 2014

	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Total</i>
6 years	551	555	544	3 790	1 095	7 825	8 920
7 years	772	341	806	7 762	1 578	16 103	17 681

	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>	<i>Public</i>	<i>Total</i>
8 years	924	328	832	7 565	1 756	15 893	17 649
9 years	773	8 207	768	7 649	1 541	15 856	17 397
10 years	709	7 831	652	7 281	1 361	15 112	16 473
11 years	622	859	586	8 282	1 208	17 141	18 349
12 years	454	586	389	8 006	843	16 592	17 435
13 years	246	388	229	4 800	475	10 188	10 663
14 years	419	422	369	4 782	788	10 204	10 992
15 years	621	717	522	4 248	1 143	8 965	10 108
16 years	589	518	498	3 649	1 087	8 167	9 254
17 years	736	988	515	1 266	1 251	3 254	4 505
18 years	946	522	643	1 635	1 589	4 157	5 746
<b>Total</b>	<b>8 362</b>	<b>78 742</b>	<b>7 353</b>	<b>70 715</b>	<b>15 715</b>	<b>149 457</b>	<b>165 172</b>

Table 4  
General enrolment and gross enrolment rate (GER) in middle school nationwide, 2013

<i>Gender</i>	<i>School-age population in 2012</i>	<i>Enrolment in 2013</i>	<i>GER</i>	<i>Gender parity index</i>
Male	624 490	355 373	56.9 %	1.04
Female	603 109	356 337	59.1 %	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1 227 598</b>	<b>711 710</b>	<b>58.0 %</b>	

Table 5  
Sample GER in four areas – Dakar and the three districts of Casamance – in 2013, as compared to national GER, shown in table 4

<i>School district</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dakar	83.5 %	95.7 %	89.5 %
Kolda	47.0 %	35.3 %	41.3 %
Sédhiou	76.5 %	50.6 %	63.8 %
Ziguinchor	82.8 %	82.9 %	82.9 %

Table 6  
GER in general secondary education in three regions, 2005

<i>School district</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dakar	61.5 %	56.8 %	59.2 %
Kolda	48.8 %	40.5 %	44.6 %
Ziguinchor	51.2 %	44.4 %	49.1 %

N.B.: There is a clear upward trend in GER over the eight-year period.

Table 7  
**Enrolment in primary education in four regions, 2013**

<i>School district</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dakar	115.0 %	125.0 %	119.0 %
Kolda	130.1 %	136.2 %	133.0 %
Sédhiou	146.3 %	145.3 %	145.8 %
Ziguinchor	106.0 %	107.5 %	106.7 %

Table 8  
**GER in primary education in the four regions mentioned above, 2013**

<i>School district</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dakar	106.6 %	126.5 %	115.9 %
Kolda	105.2 %	104.0 %	104.6 %
Sédhiou	131.9 %	120.8 %	126.4 %
Ziguinchor	95.4 %	100.9 %	98.0 %

Table 9  
**Primary school completion rate, 2013**

<i>School district</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Total</i>
Dakar	83.6 %	105.1 %	93.8 %
Kolda	71.5 %	75.8 %	73.6 %
Sédhiou	70.0 %	71.2 %	70.5 %
Ziguinchor	75.3 %	76.9 %	76.1 %

N.B.: Seven of the 14 regions of Senegal have exceeded the target of 68 per cent. These include Dakar and the three districts of Casamance.

Table 10  
**Indicators related to conditions in primary schools in Dakar, Ziguinchor, Sédhio and Kolda**

<i>School district</i>	<i>Access to drinking water</i>	<i>Sanitation</i>	<i>School meals</i>
Dakar	92.8 %	94.7 %	10.4 %
Ziguinchor	77.1 %	85.0 %	86.2 %
Sédhiou	51.3 %	61.0 %	69.5 %
Kolda	51.1 %	59.6 %	57.5 %

## 2. Access to health care

78. The Programme to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance has led to a decrease in mortality among villagers, facilitated health evacuations and provided health coverage to large numbers of villages located around health clinics.

79. The National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance has organized training workshops on the treatment of medical and psychosocial sequelae for health-care personnel, including the head nurses and the 114 managers of the warning, conflict prevention and social mobilization units set up in all local communities in Casamance.

80. Health workers have been trained to assist persons living with stress or trauma because of the conflict. They have acquired the necessary skills to identify, prevent and treat post-traumatic stress disorder. Tools are made available for screening, treatment and referral when needed at the Kenia Psychiatric Centre.

N.B.: Data provided by the Ziguinchor medical district show that the ratio of health clinics to inhabitants has risen from one post for 5,713 inhabitants in 2005 to one post for 4,998 inhabitants in 2009. The ratio of health personnel has increased from one nurse per 4,761 inhabitants in 2005 to one nurse per 2,594 inhabitants in 2009. With regard to midwives, the ratio rose from one midwife per 6,183 inhabitants in 2005 to one midwife per 2,567 inhabitants in 2009. The proportion of births attended by health personnel rose from 75 per cent in 2005 to 95 per cent in 2009.

#### **D. Mine clearance and assistance for survivors**

81. The Government established the Senegal Mine Action Committee to coordinate the implementation of mine and unexploded ordnance clearance programmes. A partnership with Handicap International has been operating in Casamance since 1999 with the support of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation. In addition to demining, the programmes in place also provide support for projects that assist persons disabled by landmines through vocational training, inclusive education and integration services involving income-generating activities and the training of specialized teachers. The programmes cover the regions of Ziguinchor, Kolda and Sédhiou. Handicap International is also running a mine-accident prevention programme with funding from USAID, and similar activities are being carried out by a survivors' association.

82. Handicap International has registered 808 victims of anti-personnel mines, most of whom are women and children, who are at greater risk because they are often engaged in field work or play in open spaces, respectively. An impact study conducted by Handicap International in 2006 shows that while in 2002 the areas most affected by mines were Nyassa and Niaguis, located in the southern part of Casamance in the Ziguinchor region, currently the worst hit area is the department of Bignona, located in the northern part of the region, towards the Gambia, because fewer demining operations have taken place there.

83. Through the intermediary of the Senegal Mine Action Committee, the State and armed groups have reached an agreement on the conduct of humanitarian demining operations in the fields adjacent to the RN6, the national road that connects Ziguinchor to Vélingara, covering an area of 150 km in length.

84. The demining programme being implemented by the Senegal Mine Action Committee in collaboration with Handicap International was due to be completed by April 2016, in the framework of efforts to give effect to the Ottawa Convention. However, demining operations were halted in late 2015, when 12 South African deminers and their Senegalese assistants were taken hostage (and released a few months later) by forces led by César Atoute Badiate, the leader of an armed faction of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance, which jeopardized the goal of completing the operations in 2016.

#### **E. Tackling school dropout**

85. To tackle school dropout, the State, in partnership with the NGO ENDA Jeunesse Action, encourages leisure activities such as drama and handicrafts and promotes the establishment of school councils for monitoring the monthly attendance records of students.

86. Protection and monitoring committees on child labour in the agricultural sector have also been set up, because some children are more interested in economic activities such as farm work, fishing and cashew picking than they are in studying.

87. A community network, Le Réseau Dynamique de Paix en Casamance (Dynamic Peace Network in Casamance), comprising 192 associations, assists the State in its efforts to reintegrate children from displaced or host families who are suffering from poverty-induced vulnerability and a lack of resources because of the conflict.

88. The network runs a withdrawal-reintegration programme for children living in and around military camps, provides educational support, especially for students in examination classes, and assists in obtaining birth certificates to facilitate the re-enrolment of displaced children. School kits are also distributed with the support of the NGO Afrik Enjeux. Over a



period two years, 500 children in Balantacounda have benefited from this programme, which has received support from the Austrian development agency.

## **F. Birth registration**

89. Circuit courts are often convened by local authorities to tackle the problem of the non-registration of many children in civil registers and the loss of identity papers that often results from hasty displacement from dangerous to safer areas. The NGO ENDA Jeunesse Action supports the State by organizing regular meetings with village chiefs who keep birth records, which can be used for registration purposes. The NGO Afrik Enjeux also supports the State in providing assistance to the children of displaced or newly returned families and in obtaining birth certificates to facilitate their enrolment in school.

## **II. Major challenges and prospects for the future**

90. The current “no war, no peace” situation is not conducive to a return to normal life for the general population, or to the economic recovery and massive investment necessary for reconstruction in Casamance. While efforts are being made by the State and its agencies, such as the National Agency to Revive Economic and Social Activity in Casamance, with the support of development partners, the projects and programmes that have been or are being implemented are insufficient given the scale of social and infrastructural demand. That is why it is so important that a fair and final peace agreement be signed as soon as possible.

91. However, this peace agreement must have the support of all factions of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance. Moreover, the different factions must speak with one voice to allow the State to communicate with a single interlocutor. In this regard, lessons have been learned from the failures of previous ceasefire and peace agreements, in particular with regard to the non-unification of the Movement of Democratic Forces of Casamance prior to negotiations.

92. The next peace agreement should include a clause on the implementation of a consensual disarmament, demobilization and social reintegration programme for combatants of the Movement to prevent ex-combatants from becoming involved in petty or organized crime, a phenomenon that has been observed in other countries in post-conflict situations in the subregion.

93. Demining must be completed within a reasonable time frame in all affected areas to promote the return of economic and social activity throughout Casamance.

94. Combating drug and *vène* timber trafficking and the cultivation of Indian hemp in insecure areas will be a top priority in order to prevent the establishment of a wartime economy, which would be harmful to the real economy and could contribute to the resurgence of the conflict.

95. New large-scale awareness-raising campaigns on the protection of vulnerable children will be conducted in Jola and other languages spoken in the region.

96. Universal education for children and efforts to meet their special needs will be a major focus of programmes and projects.

97. The effective social reintegration of children affected by the conflict, with the support of the country’s technical and financial partners, is also one of the primary objectives of current and future programmes and projects.

## **Conclusion**

98. The State of Senegal is committed to the ideals of peace, justice and the peaceful coexistence of the States and peoples of the world, and has consistently been one of the first in line to sign conventions and protocols. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict is no exception.

99. The State is aware that, despite the measures taken and the progress made in the implementation of the Optional Protocol with the support of NGOs and technical and financial partners, various obstacles must be overcome in order to better protect children living in areas affected by the conflict in Casamance.

100. First among these challenges is the establishment of a just and definitive peace with the armed groups, which is necessary to ensure the proper application of the Optional Protocol. All ways and means will be deployed to achieve this end.

101. The situation of relative calm that has prevailed for some time in this southern part of Senegal and the upcoming negotiations between all parties to the conflict presage the imminent possibility of a long-awaited and -desired peace, which is the only possible guarantee of resilience and development for children living with their biological or host families in the beautiful natural region of Casamance.

---