

Recommendations to the Security Council

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the Secretary-General's (SG's) annual report on children and armed conflict for recruitment and use of children, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is listed for all five 'trigger' violations. In May, the Security Council is expected to renew UNAMI's mandate, which expires at the end of the month. Despite the end of large-scale military operations against ISIL, the security situation remains fragile, and children continue to be vulnerable to rights violations. Between November 2018 and January 2019, the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified nine incidents of grave violations against children, resulting in the killing of six boys and the maiming of 15 boys and 6 girls ([S/2019/101](#), para. 47). The detention of children for any perceived connection to ISIL by Iraqi and Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) authorities continues to raise significant concerns; Human Rights Watch (HRW) estimates that at the end of 2018, Iraqi and KRG authorities were holding some 1,500 children in detention for alleged ISIL affiliation. HRW research also [found](#) that authorities had used torture on child detainees to coerce confessions and sentenced them to prison in hasty and unfair trials. Women and children are prevented from leaving camps in Northern Iraq for their perceived ties to ISIL, restricting their rights to freedom of movement and education, as well as access to other services. Humanitarian access remains [challenging](#), due to restrictions by local authorities, as well as insecurity caused by attacks and the placement of improvised explosive devices. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew and strengthen UNAMI's child protection mandate**, with a focus on supporting the Government of Iraq in developing and implementing an action plan, and enhancing juvenile justice and the rehabilitation and reintegration of children formerly associated with parties to conflict;
- **Urge the Government to enter into an action plan with the United Nations** to strengthen measures to protect all children affected by the conflict in Iraq, including the prevention of recruitment and use of children by the PMF and other parties, rehabilitation and reintegration, and enhancement of juvenile justice;
- Remind all parties that **children should be considered primarily as victims**, entitled to full protection of their rights, including to due process of law, and that **alternatives to detention should be prioritized whenever possible**;
- **Urge Government and KRG authorities to facilitate full access to detention facilities** for UN and other relevant independent monitors;
- Demand that Government and KRG authorities immediately **end all use of torture and coerced confessions, and investigate and appropriately prosecute** those responsible;
- **Call on Government and KRG authorities to lift bureaucratic restrictions and other impediments to humanitarian access, and to facilitate the safe, unhindered provision of assistance** to children and other civilians in need.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON IRAQ.

SOMALIA

The Somali National Army (SNA) is listed for recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children, and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use. Al-Shabaab is listed for all five trigger violations. In 2012, the Government signed action plans to end and prevent grave violations. In May, the SG will update the Council on the situation in Somalia, pursuant to SCR 2462 (2019), and provide a technical assessment of the arms embargo, per SCR 2444 (2018). The Council is expected to renew AMISOM's mandate, which expires on May 31. Continued insecurity caused by targeting of civilians by Al-Shabaab and IS affiliates, as well as the presence of [landmines and explosive remnants of war](#) (ERWs), pose significant challenges to the [protection of civilians](#) and [humanitarian access](#). US airstrikes raise additional concerns; a recent [report](#) from Amnesty International found US strikes in 2017 and 2018 were responsible for civilian casualties, including the killing and maiming of children. Insecurity, paired with the effects of drought and evictions, have driven [displacement](#), with over 137,000 fleeing their homes in the first quarter of 2019 alone. **Council Members should:**

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

[Afghanistan](#)
[Central African Republic](#)
[Colombia](#)
[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)
[Iraq](#)
[Mali](#)
[Myanmar \(Burma\)](#)
[Nigeria](#)
[Philippines](#)
[Somalia](#)
[South Sudan](#)
[Sudan](#)
[Syrian Arab Republic](#)
[Yemen](#)

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Somalia cont'd

- **Condemn all violations of humanitarian law and human rights**, including by Al-Shabaab, affiliates linked to ISIL, Somali national and regional forces, and international forces, and **call on all parties to comply with their obligations under international law, to take all precautions to protect children and other civilians**, and to minimize civilian deaths and casualties;
- **Call for the timely implementation of the Government's action plans** to end and prevent grave violations against children by national forces;
- **Urge the Government of Somalia to consider as victims those children who have been released or otherwise separated from armed forces or groups; to cease detention of children on national security-related charges** where it is in violation of applicable international law; and **to fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child**, further to SCR 2461 (2019);
- Welcoming AMISOM's ongoing efforts to assist Somali security forces in addressing human rights, protection, and gender concerns, **request an update from the SG on measures taken to address and prevent grave violations against children, including sexual violence, by national forces**;
- Recognizing Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Uganda's endorsement of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers, **encourage other countries contributing troops and police to AMISOM to endorse the Vancouver Principles**.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON SOMALIA.

OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

In May, the UN Security Council will hold its annual open debate on the protection of civilians (PoC) in conflict, marking 20 years since the mandate's establishment. The Council will receive the SG's annual report on PoC, including updates on the implementation of SCRs 2286 (2016) and 2417 (2018), on the protection of medical facilities and personnel in conflict, and the link between armed conflict and food insecurity, respectively. In 2018, there were more than 950 attacks on health facilities and personnel in 23 countries, killing more than 150 health workers and injuring more than 700, according to forthcoming research from the Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition. Such attacks not only violate international law, but also endanger the lives of medical personnel and children and other civilians in need of lifesaving care.

The Council and other UN Member States should:

- **Strengthen the ability of UN peace operations to protect civilians by providing political support to these missions and ensuring they have adequate resources and capabilities to match their mandates**, including dedicated child protection capacity; in this regard, ensure that PoC and child protection concerns are prioritized even in the context of downsizing, consolidation, or transition of peace operations;
- **Take steps to implement the Declaration of Shared Commitments on UN Peacekeeping Operations**, particularly those commitments on strengthening the protection of civilians, improving performance and accountability, and sustaining peace, to sustain momentum behind much-needed peacekeeping reform; furthermore, **endorse and implement the Kigali Principles and the Vancouver Principles**;
- **Bolster efforts to prevent attacks against civilians**, including protected individuals and structures such as hospitals and schools, **through enhanced trainings for uniformed personnel**;
- **Call on the SG to ensure a credible and accurate list of perpetrators in the annexes of his annual report on children and armed conflict**, including listing parties responsible for attacks on hospitals and health workers as required by SCR 1998 and for other trigger violations.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE PENHOLDER ON PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT.

Recommendations to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

The Working Group is in the process of negotiating conclusions on Myanmar and on Syria. For recommendations, see Watchlist's December 2018 CAC Monthly Update.

May Presidency of the Security Council: Indonesia

- Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and ILO Convention 182. Not yet a party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments. Has not yet endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO resources

- 🔗 Amnesty International & Airwars, Syria: Unprecedented Investigation Reveals US-led Coalition Killed More Than 1,600 Civilians in Raqqa 'Death Trap', April 2019
- 🔗 Geneva Call, Negotiation of Humanitarian Access in North Kivu, March 2019
- 🔗 Human Rights Watch, Cameroon: New Attacks on Civilians By Troops, Separatists, March 2019
- 🔗 Human Rights Watch, Bangladesh: Rohingya Refugee Students Expelled, April 2019
- 🔗 Human Rights Watch, Yemen: Houthi Landmines Kill Civilians, Block Aid, April 2019
- 🔗 Médecins Sans Frontières, Complicated Delivery - The Yemeni Mothers and Children Dying without Medical Care, April 2019
- 🔗 Norwegian Refugee Council, Gaza: NRC Urges Protection of Civilians amid Rise in Hostilities, March 2019
- 🔗 Save the Children, Syria: Three Children Killed in Idlib Shelling, April 2019
- 🔗 Statement of INGOs in Myanmar on the Situation in Rakhine, April 2019

About Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a global network of international human rights and humanitarian non-governmental organizations which strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts through local partnerships, reporting, and advocacy.

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