

Recommendations to the Security Council

OPEN DEBATE ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

On August 2, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on children and armed conflict under Poland's presidency. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (SRS-G-CAAC) will present the Secretary-General's (SG) [annual report](#) on children and armed conflict (S/2019/509), covering events in 2018. For detailed recommendations, please see Watchlist's August 2019 [Special Update](#).

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the SG's most recent 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 August, the Security Council is expected to receive the SG's quarterly report on UNAMI, pursuant to SCR 2470 (2019). Thousands of children continue to languish in detention facilities, camps, or orphanages for their or their relatives' alleged association with ISIL. Many of those in detention are reportedly being held in [overcrowded facilities](#), in unfit conditions that may amount to ill-treatment and collective punishment under international law. Those in camps face restrictions on their freedom of movement, discrimination, lack of access to education and basic services, stigmatization, expropriation and destruction of their properties, and confiscation of legal documents. State security forces, including the PMF, have reportedly entered displacement camps in northern Iraq to question residents about the actions and whereabouts of relatives suspected of ISIL affiliation, which threatens the civilian nature of these camps. In at least one case, security forces were using a [school](#) for "screening" purposes, in contravention of international humanitarian principles and the [Safe Schools Declaration](#), which the Government of Iraq has endorsed. About 1.6 million Iraqis remain internally [displaced](#), with current [trends](#) suggesting many will remain displaced for the foreseeable future. Displaced children face myriad challenges, including lack of access to quality [education](#), sexual and gender-based violence, and denial of a legal identity. One of the main obstacles to returns is the presence of explosive remnants of war (ERWs) in former ISIL-held territories.

The UN Security Council should:

- Welcome ongoing discussions between the Government and the United Nations, and **encourage the Government to swiftly develop and sign an action plan** to end and prevent grave violations, including recruitment and use of children by the PMF, as well as to strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration, and enhance juvenile justice;
- Remind the Government of its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration, and **urge State security forces to refrain from using schools** for military purposes;
- Remind all parties that **children should be considered primarily as victims**, entitled to full protection of their rights, including due process of law, and urge the Government to develop and prioritize alternatives to detention whenever possible, ensuring the best interests of the child;
- Call upon the Government and Kurdish regional authorities to allow **UNAMI and other relevant independent monitors access** to facilities where children are detained;
- **Prioritize demining activities and the removal of ERWs**, especially from territories formerly under the control of ISIL, in order to **improve conditions for safe, voluntary returns** of internally displaced persons; such conditions should include access to all the necessary information about travel routes and destinations, especially availability of schools and primary care services for children.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON IRAQ.

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](#)

For resolution language on Children and Armed Conflict, download the Children and Armed Conflict smartphone app from Watchlist, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland available on [iPhone](#), [iPad](#), [Android](#), [Blackberry](#), and the web!



SUDAN

Four non-State armed actors are listed for child rights violations in Sudan, three of whom have signed action plans with the UN to end and prevent grave violations. In August, the Security Council is expected to receive an oral update from the SG on the situation in Sudan, pursuant to SCR 2479 (2019). The resolution also extended the period for UNAMID's withdrawal in light of the ouster of former president Omar al-Bashir in April and the subsequent takeover by the Transitional Military Council (TMC). Since December 2018, Government security forces have violently cracked down on civilian protesters, including children. In [June alone](#), Government forces killed over 130 protesters, including at least 19 children, and injured at least 49 children. According to [UNICEF](#), others have been detained, recruited to join the fighting, and sexually abused. Most recently, on July 29, Rapid Support Forces (RSF) [shot and killed](#) at least five teenage children at a protest in El-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State. Schools, hospitals, and health centers have also been targeted, looted, and destroyed. Human rights groups have [rejected](#) the findings of a TMC-backed investigation into crackdowns on protesters in Khartoum, saying that TMC figures are significantly lower than the death toll statistics documented by local civil society and fail to address credible allegations of sexual violence against protesters by security forces. The situation in Darfur and other conflict-affected regions also remains dire, with continuing [attacks on civilians](#) by Government forces, [intercommunal violence](#), and Sudan Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) inter-factional fighting in the Jebel Marra area. Thousands of civilians living in rebel-controlled areas continue to face challenges accessing humanitarian aid, as well as attacks by SLA/AW factions and Sudanese Armed Forces, leading to displacements. SLA/AW factions have reportedly perpetrated sexual violence against children, abductions and recruitment of children, and attacks on schools and hospitals. **The Security Council should:**

- **Unequivocally condemn all human rights violations** by State security forces, including the excessive use of force, sexual violence, and unlawful detention of protesters, including children, as well as abuses by non-State armed actors in Jebel Marra;
- Call upon Government authorities to **allow humanitarian organizations to respond to those in need, including through access to hospitals** that have been off-limits or closed;
- Urge authorities to allow **unhindered access to all areas of Sudan** for UN and other independent international monitors;
- Call for an **impartial, independent investigation into the attacks on protesters**, including cases of sexual and gender-based violence by militias and other armed groups, and for those responsible to be held accountable;
- **Expand targeted sanctions in Sudan**, now only focused on Darfur, to individuals responsible for violence against protesters and other peaceful opposition, including children;
- Carefully consider ongoing issues relating to the protection of civilians, including [child protection](#) concerns, in the context of discussions on UNAMID's drawdown, and **ensure a meaningful presence of child protection experts with adequate staffing and resources in Darfur**, in order to safeguard the continuity of the UN's Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM).

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON DARFUR. POLAND CHAIRS THE 1591 SUDAN SANCTIONS COMMITTEE.

Update on the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

On July 9, the Working Group adopted [conclusions](#) on Syria, on the basis of the SG's [second report](#) on the situation of children and armed conflict in Syria. On July 30, the Working Group adopted [conclusions](#) on Myanmar (full text forthcoming), based on the SG's [fifth report](#) on the situation of children in Myanmar. The Working Group is expected to soon begin negotiations on Yemen. For detailed recommendations for the Working Group on Yemen, please see Watchlist's [July 2019 Update](#).

August Presidency of the Security Council: Poland

- Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I, II, and III, Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, ILO Convention 182, and the Rome Statute of the ICC. Endorsed the Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments, the Vancouver Principles, and the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO resources

- Human Rights Watch, Afghanistan War's Terrible Toll on Children: Attacks in Civilian Areas Kill and Injure Hundreds, July 1, 2019
- Geneva Call, Yemen: Southern Transitional Council Signs Deeds of Commitment to Improve the Protection of Civilians During Armed Conflicts, July 2, 2019
- Mwatana for Human Rights, Withering Life: Human Rights Situation in Yemen 2018, July 16, 2019
- Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, 42 Health Facilities Run by SCA in Wardak Closed by Taliban, July 17, 2019
- Human Rights Watch, Syria: Dire Conditions for ISIS Suspects' Families, July 23, 2019
- Save the Children, More Children Killed in Idlib in Last Four Weeks than All of 2018, July 24, 2019
- Watchlist, New UN Report Fails to Apply the Same Standard to All Child Rights Violators, July 30, 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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