

Recommendations to the Security Council

PEACEKEEPING REFORM

In September, the Security Council will meet to discuss peacekeeping reform, pursuant to Resolution 2378 (2017), which requests a comprehensive annual briefing by the Secretary-General (SG) on the issue. In the context of these discussions, **the Security Council, as well as non-Council Members, should:**

- **Express support for dedicated child protection capacity** in UN peace operations, and ensure that missions have the necessary staff and budgetary resources to carry out these specialized functions;
- **Ensure that child protection concerns are prioritized in peacekeeping reform efforts**, including implementation of the 2017 DPKO-DFS-DPA Child Protection Policy and resourcing of policy-derived specialized training on child protection for UN military, police, and staff;
- In the context of downsizing, consolidation, or transition of such operations, make provisions to **allow for the continuity of core child protection functions**, such as increasing and transferring appropriate funding and capacities to the UN Country Team and UNICEF.

AFGHANISTAN

The Afghan National Police (ANP), including the Afghan Local Police (ALP), are listed in the SG's latest report on children and armed conflict for recruitment and use of children. Four armed groups are listed for recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children. Of these, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP) is also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals, and the Taliban for attacks on schools and hospitals and abductions. UNAMA's mandate is due for renewal in September. Despite progress in talks between the US and the Taliban, children and other civilians continue to bear the brunt of escalating violence. In July, UNAMA recorded more than 1,500 civilian casualties – the highest number documented in a single month since May 2017 – a significant portion of which it attributes to targeted attacks against civilians by Anti-Government Elements (AGEs). Preparations for this year's presidential election, currently scheduled for September, also add to the risks for children. In previous elections, the Taliban and other armed groups attacked voter registration and polling centers, including many schools used as such, endangering children's lives and their right to education. Girls face particular challenges accessing schools as a result of attacks or threats of attack by armed groups who oppose girls' education, and many fear that any future government including the Taliban might once again ban or limit education for girls. Restrictions on humanitarian access, as well as general insecurity, are preventing children from accessing essential services. In the first half of 2019 alone, the UN had already recorded 197 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, equaling some 85 percent of all incidents recorded in 2018. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew UNAMA's child protection mandate**, and to ensure its implementation, request the SG to **strengthen specific and dedicated child protection capacity** within UNAMA; in subsequent budget negotiations, ensure distinct budget lines for child protection;
- Demand that all parties **cease attacks on schools and their military use, and urge the Government to uphold its commitments** under the Safe Schools Declaration and to take measures to **protect schools that may be used as polling centers** during the upcoming elections;
- Call on all parties to **allow safe, unhindered access to humanitarian services**, including health care and vaccinations for children.

GERMANY AND INDONESIA LEAD ON AFGHANISTAN. INDONESIA CHAIRS THE 1267 ISIL AND AL-QAIDA SANCTIONS COMMITTEE AND THE 1988 AFGHANISTAN SANCTIONS COMMITTEE.

LIBYA

Libya is considered a situation of concern in the SG's annual report on children and armed conflict. UNSMIL's mandate is up for renewal in September. Despite the lack of dedicated resources for monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children, as well as access constraints and other challenges, the UN has documented the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals. It has also received credible reports of the recruitment and use of children, as well as of sexual violence against children. UNICEF estimates that up to 500,000 children are at risk since the April escalation of the conflict in Western Libya; migrant and refugee children face additional risks, including of arbitrary detention, ill-treatment in detention, and sexual exploitation and abuse. Since April, the UN has documented at least 37 attacks on health workers and facilities, and nearly 120,000 students are out of school owing to attacks, the use of schools to house

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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Libya cont'd

displaced persons, and general insecurity. In August, [intensifying clashes](#) in the southern town of Murzuq involving air and drone strikes left at least 90 dead, including children, and displaced thousands more. **The Security Council should:**

- **Express grave concern about the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Libya and its particular impact on children**, including refugees and migrants, and call upon all parties to immediately end and prevent grave violations against children;
- **Request UNSMIL to strengthen monitoring and reporting** on grave violations against children, including through dedicated child protection capacity, and **request the SG to include information on the situation of children** affected by armed conflict in his briefings and reports to the Council;
- Call upon the Government to **immediately and unconditionally release all those detained arbitrarily or otherwise unlawfully deprived of their liberty**, in particular children, and to **put in place measures to ensure the protection of all detainees' rights**, including due process, as well as their protection from torture and other ill-treatment;
- Call upon all parties to **take measures to protect children and other civilians** in the course of the conduct of hostilities, including by immediately **halting attacks on schools and hospitals**, and **ending the use of explosive weapons with wide area effect** in populated areas.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON LIBYA, AND GERMANY IS CHAIR OF THE SANCTIONS COMMITTEE.

SYRIA

Government forces, including the National Defense Forces and pro-Government militias, and six armed groups are currently listed. In September, the Council will receive monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, the political process, and the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Since April, a Syrian government-led and Russian-backed offensive on northwest Syria has had devastating impacts on children, further [exacerbated](#) after the collapse of a conditional ceasefire on August 5. According to [Save the Children](#), 17 children were killed in Idlib in just 17 days since the ceasefire fell apart, and at least 40,000 children were forcibly displaced – often not for the first time – in less than three weeks. According to [UNICEF](#), there have been more than 73 attacks on education facilities and 49 attacks on health facilities in northwestern Syria, including Idlib, Aleppo, and Hama, since the beginning of 2019; the agency has also documented 29 attacks on water stations, affecting the water supply to over 610,000 people. On August 1, the SG [announced](#) the establishment of an internal UN Board of Inquiry (BoI) to investigate attacks on UN-supported health care facilities and protected civilian sites that were on a list provided to Syrian authorities for deconfliction. The situation of children with real or perceived affiliation with the Islamic State (IS), including children of foreign fighters, also remains deeply concerning. Al-Hol camp continues to house over 70,000 displaced civilians, some 94 percent of whom are women and children; many of these children face restrictions on their freedom of movement, stigmatization, statelessness, and other rights abuses as a result of their alleged ties with the armed group. **Security Council Members should:**

- Urge all parties to **immediately halt attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure**, including hospitals and schools, and to **respect the latest ceasefire**;
- **Demand accountability for ongoing violations** of international human rights and international humanitarian law in northwestern Syria, including by calling on the SG to urgently appoint the BoI to investigate the recent series of attacks and attribute responsibility for incidents; furthermore, **request the SG to make public the BoI's findings and recommendations**;
- Remind all parties that **all children, including those suspected of association with armed groups, are entitled to special care and protection** under international law, and should be treated first and foremost as victims;
- Call on countries of origin to **safely repatriate foreign children and their families**, following individual rights-based needs assessments, for the purposes of prosecution, rehabilitation, and/or reintegration, as appropriate, and in line with international law and standards.

BELGIUM, GERMANY, AND KUWAIT LEAD ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES ON SYRIA.

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

For detailed recommendations for the Working Group on Yemen, please see Watchlist's [July 2019 Update](#).

September Presidency of the Security Council: Russian Federation

- Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I and II, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and ILO Convention 182. Has not ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC. Endorsed the Paris Principles and the Paris Commitments; has not endorsed the Vancouver Principles nor the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO resources

- Amnesty International, Sudan: Close Down Trigger-Happy Paramilitary Force, Not Schools, July 31, 2019
- Save the Children, One Year After Yemen Bus Attack, Child Survivors Describe Grueling Battle to Recover, August 8, 2019
- Human Rights Watch, The War in Catatumbo: Abuses by Armed Groups Against Civilians Including Venezuelan Exiles in Northeastern Colombia, August 8, 2019
- Geneva Call, Democratic Republic of the Congo: Geneva Call Obtains a Formal Engagement from the Armed Non-State Actor APCLS to Facilitate Humanitarian Access, August 16, 2019
- Joint Statement by 61 NGOs on Myanmar and Safe Returns, Two Years On: Rohingya Deserve Justice, A Place at the Table, August 21, 2019
- Amnesty International, Cameroon: Trial of Soldiers for Killing Women and Children Must Lead to Justice for Victims, August 26, 2019
- Human Rights Watch, Iraq: School Doors Barred to Many Children, August 28, 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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