

Recommendations to the Security Council

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

The ex-Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, the anti-balaka local defense militias, and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) are all listed in the Secretary-General's (SG) 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict (CAC) for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and sexual violence. The ex-Séléka coalition is also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals, and the LRA for abductions. Three armed groups part of the ex-Séléka coalition have signed action plans with the UN. Pursuant to SCR 2448 (2018), the Security Council is due to receive a report from the SG on the situation in CAR and the implementation of MINUSCA's mandate. Despite the signing of a historic peace agreement between the Government of CAR and 14 armed groups in February 2019, which addresses all six grave violations against children, spikes of violence in areas of the country not previously affected by the conflict are creating new displacements and humanitarian needs. In the first half of September alone, violence in the northeastern town of Birao forcibly displaced approximately 13,000 civilians, mostly women and children. Sexual violence against children, especially girls, remains a major concern. In July, UNICEF documented 102 cases of gender-based violence against children (90 girls), including 55 cases of rape. Displaced children face heightened risk of sexual violence, especially girls collecting firewood and water, when most incidents reportedly take place. Conflict and insecurity continue to impact children's access to education, with 191 schools reportedly closed in eastern CAR and 57,300 children unable to start classes in September. While 2019 has witnessed a decrease in the total number of attacks against aid workers as compared with 2018, OCHA has reported that the level and severity of the incidents has more than doubled: 28 humanitarians were wounded between January and August 2019, as compared to 13 in all of 2018. In July, there were 29 incidents affecting humanitarian workers, the highest monthly total since January. **The Security Council should:**

- Insist that all signatories to the peace deal **comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and commit to the full implementation of the February agreement;**
- Urge the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC), the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), and *l'Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans** to end and prevent grave violations and release all children still in their ranks; further **call upon all other listed parties to develop and sign action plans;**
- Urge the Government of CAR to **accelerate institutional reforms for the reconstruction of the rule of law, in particular the protection of children**, by promptly criminalizing grave violations against children in armed conflict and adopting the Child Protection Code, in line with the recommendations of the SG (A/73/907-S/2019/509) and the Independent Expert on human rights in CAR (A/HRC/42/61).

FRANCE IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON CAR, AND CÔTE D'IVOIRE CHAIRS THE 2127 SANCTIONS COMMITTEE.

COLOMBIA

The *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) is listed in the SG's annual CAC report for recruitment and use. In October, the Security Council will receive a briefing on the SG's 90-day report on the UN Verification Mission in Colombia. In September, the Council renewed the mission's mandate for a period of one year. The situation is volatile, especially following the August 29 announcement by Iván Márquez – a lead negotiator of the peace agreement and a former commander of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia – Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) – that he and two other key commanders had returned to arms, citing the Government's lack of political commitment to implementing the agreement. Human rights groups and local civil society actors have reported an increase in child recruitment in recent months, including by FARC-EP dissidents, the ELN, the *Ejército Popular de Liberación* (EPL), and other armed groups. The situation has been further exacerbated by the crisis in Venezuela, with reports of cross-border recruitment and additional vulnerabilities for migrant children and youth. In a number of regions, including Antioquia, Chocó, Nariño, and Norte de Santander, armed clashes between warring parties and targeted attacks against civilians have resulted in civilian casualties and mass displacement, up from previous years. In the first half of 2019, the number of attacks on civilians in Norte de Santander had already reached 85 percent of all attacks recorded in 2018. In Nariño, between January and July 2019, OCHA recorded 13 mass displacements, affecting 6,439 civilians.

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

[Afghanistan](#)
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[Colombia](#)
[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)
[Iraq](#)
[Mali](#)
[Myanmar \(Burma\)](#)
[Nigeria](#)
[Philippines](#)
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Colombia cont'd

The Security Council should:

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations against children**, including those perpetrated by FARC-EP dissidents, the ELN, the EPL, and other armed groups;
- Call upon all parties to **take concrete, effective measures to end and prevent child casualties during hostilities**, including protecting schools, hospitals, and other civilian objects; and **demand the immediate and unconditional release of all children and adolescents** from armed groups in coordination, where possible, with child protection actors;
- Remind the Government of its obligations under the peace agreement to **strengthen institutions and programs to ensure the adequate reintegration of children** and prevent new patterns of recruitment and use, especially where Government presence is limited and communities are more vulnerable to violence and insecurity;
- **Urge the Government to fulfill its commitments through the comprehensive implementation of the peace agreement**, including strengthening the Comprehensive System of Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Non-Repetition.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON COLOMBIA.

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 violations for which it is listed. In 2018, the number of children affected by grave violations in Somalia increased by 23 percent as compared with 2017; Somalia topped all other countries on the CAC agenda, with the highest number of cases of child recruitment and use (2,300), sexual violence (331), and abductions (1,609). In October, the Emergency Relief Coordinator is expected to report to the Council on the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Somalia. The deadly combination of conflict, insecurity, and drought has led nearly a quarter of a million civilians to flee their homes and left millions facing food insecurity. At least 178,400 children face severe malnourishment. However, continued insecurity caused by targeting of civilians by Al-Shabaab and Islamic State (IS) affiliates, as well as the presence of landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERWs), pose significant challenges to humanitarian access, not to mention the protection of civilians. The dire humanitarian situation is further exacerbated by funding shortfalls. In August, several Council members objected to a proposal to impose additional counterterrorism (CT) sanctions against Al-Shabaab, which could have jeopardized access to humanitarian assistance for millions of Somali children and other civilians living in territories with Al-Shabaab presence. **The Security Council should:**

- **Condemn all violations of international human rights and IHL**, including by Al-Shabaab, IS affiliates, Somali national and regional forces, and international forces;
- **Call on all sides to respect international law**, including by taking all precautions to protect children and other civilians, minimizing civilian deaths and casualties, and **allowing safe, unhindered access to humanitarian assistance**;
- In broader discussions on humanitarian access, **ensure humanitarian safeguards are included in all UN sanctions and CT measures**; furthermore, consider amending SCR 2462 on preventing and combating the financing of terrorism and the 1267 sanctions regime to include safeguards for humanitarian activities.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON SOMALIA, AND BELGIUM CHAIRS THE 751 SANCTIONS COMMITTEE.

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

For detailed recommendations on Yemen, please see Watchlist's July 2019 Update. In September, the Working Group received the SG's fourth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Afghanistan and is expected to begin negotiating conclusions in October.

October Presidency of the Security Council: South Africa

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 on the worst forms of child labour. Has ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, and the Safe Schools Declaration; has not yet endorsed the Vancouver Principles.

NGO resources

- Amnesty International, Myanmar: Civilians at Risk in Northern Shan State Fighting, Sept. 3, 2019
- Oxfam, Nile Hope, et al., No Simple Solutions: Women, Displacement and Durable Solutions in South Sudan, Sept. 4, 2019
- Norwegian Refugee Council, Afghanistan: Sounding the Alarm about the Lack of Schools, Sept. 10, 2019
- Human Rights Watch, "They Didn't Know If I Was Alive or Dead": Military Detention of Children for Suspected Boko Haram Involvement in Northeast Nigeria, Sept. 10, 2019
- Physicians for Human Rights, PHR: UN Plan to Investigate Recent Attacks on Health Care in Syria Woefully Insufficient, Sept. 16, 2019
- Save the Children, Yemen: Save the Children Calls for Investigation into Killing of Five Children, Sept. 24, 2019
- Human Rights Watch, UN Takes Strong Stand on Sri Lanka's Army Chief, Sept. 26, 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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