

Recommendations to the Security Council

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the Secretary-General's (SG) 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 November, the SG will report on UNAMI's progress pursuant to SCR 2470 (2019). In his previous report, the SG notes five children were killed and 31 injured between April and June 2019 (S/2019/660, para. 55). Unlike prior reports submitted to the Security Council in 2018, the SG's reports from May (S/2019/365) and August (S/2019/660) did not include dedicated sections on grave violations verified by the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR). The detention of children for alleged affiliation with ISIL continues to be a concern, with at least 902 children detained on national security-related charges according to the SG's most recent annual report. On October 10, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed willingness to receive and prosecute ISIL-affiliated fighters and their families who are Iraqi citizens. **The 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 in line with international standards;
- Remind all parties that **children should be considered primarily as victims**, entitled to full protection of their rights, and urge the Government to develop and prioritize alternatives to detention whenever possible, ensuring the best interests of the child;
- Request that the SG **include a dedicated section on children and armed conflict in all his progress reports** on UNAMI, disaggregating data on the six grave violations, and signaling priority concerns to guide Council action.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON IRAQ.

SOUTH SUDAN/SUDAN (ABYEI)

UNISFA's current mandate will expire on November 15, 2019, pursuant to SCR 2469 (2019). In his latest report, the SG notes the mission's continued engagement with communities on human rights and international standards, emphasizing protection of women and children (S/2019/817, paras. 19, 23). During the previous reporting period, a civilian Women and Child Protection Advisor was deployed to Abyei; however, the report included no specific information on children and armed conflict. On July 16, a group of unknown men attacked UNISFA peacekeepers at Amiet market, resulting in several casualties including an eight-month-old child. **The Security Council should:**

- Welcome the Women and Child Protection Advisor's deployment, ensure adequate child protection capacity within UNISFA, and **request an update on the situation of children affected by armed conflict** in Abyei;
- Urge parties to **respect international human rights and international humanitarian law (IHL)**, and to **take measures to protect civilians, especially children**;
- Request the SG to **include children and armed conflict as a specific aspect of future progress reports** on UNISFA, disaggregating data on the six grave violations, and signaling priority concerns to guide Council action on Abyei.

THE UNITED STATES IS THE LEAD COUNTRY ON SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN.

SYRIA

Government forces, including the National Defense Forces and pro-Government militias, and six armed groups are currently listed in the annexes of SG's annual report for at least one grave violation against children. In November, the Security Council will receive monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, political process, and use of chemical weapons in Syria. Following an announced withdrawal of US troops, Turkish forces with Syrian rebel allies launched a military operation in northeast Syria on October 9 against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). In June, the SDF signed an action plan with the UN to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. Since recent hostilities began, nearly 80,000 children have been displaced, at least five children have been killed and another 26 injured, and three health facilities/vehicles and one school have come under attack. When the operation started, more than

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](#)
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SYRIA cont'd

9,000 children of 40 nationalities were living in Al Hol, Ain Issa, and Roj camps – the second of which has reportedly been shelled. As of October 13, only 350 foreign children had been repatriated to their home countries. Despite an announced pause in Turkey's military operation on October 17, hostilities continued to be reported, and more than 12,000 have people fled to Iraq, with women and children making up nearly 75 percent of new arrivals. **The Security Council should:**

- Urge all parties to **immediately halt attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure**, including hospitals and schools, and to **allow safe, timely, and unimpeded humanitarian access to civilians in need**, including cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access to Syria;
- **Demand accountability for violations** of international human rights and IHL, and encourage the SG to make public the conclusions of the Board of Inquiry in northwest Syria to strengthen future accountability;
- Remind 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 primarily 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, in line with international law and standards;
- Call on the SDF to **promptly and fully implement its action plan**, and urge other listed parties to develop and sign action plans to end and prevent violations against children.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE WORKING GROUP

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. 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. In September, the Working Group received the SG's fourth report on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan. Over 14,000 grave violations were verified during the reporting period, covering January 2015 to December 2018. In October, UNAMA's quarterly report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict documented record-high numbers of civilian casualties, including 1,220 children verified as killed (291) and maimed (929). Forty-one percent of all civilian casualties were women and children. **The Working Group should:**

- Urge the Government to **swiftly and fully implement its 2011 action plan** and 2014 roadmap to end and prevent recruitment and use by its security forces, and intensify efforts to end and prevent recruitment and use by the ANP, the ALP, and Afghan Territorial Forces;
- Strongly **condemn all grave violations**, especially killing and maiming of children through deliberate attacks on civilians and civilian objects, or the use of explosive objects in populated areas, and **urge all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL**;
- Urge all parties to **take immediate and specific measures to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including the practice of *bacha bazi*, and **ensure timely and impartial investigation and prosecution** of perpetrators in accordance with the revised penal code;
- Demand that all parties immediately **cease attacks on and military use of schools**, and **urge the Government to uphold its commitments** under the Safe Schools Declaration;
- Request that the SG continue to **strengthen UNAMA's child protection capacity, including by ensuring distinct budget lines**, for the effective delivery of its child protection mandate.

YEMEN

In June, the SG's second report on children and armed conflict in Yemen was formally presented to the Working Group. Negotiations began in August and are ongoing. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's July 2019 CAC Monthly Update.

Presidency of the Security Council for November: United Kingdom

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

NGO resources

- Refugees International: Still in Danger: Women and Girls Face Sexual Violence in South Sudan Despite Peace Deal, Oct. 17, 2019
- Save the Children: Twenty Afghan Children Injured After Explosion Near School, Oct. 16, 2019
- Norwegian Refugee Council: New Fuel Crisis Deepens Suffering for Hungry Yemenis, Oct. 16, 2019
- The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action: Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (2019 Edition) Oct. 10, 2019
- Human Rights Watch: Global Efforts Needed to Free Detained Children, Oct. 7, 2019
- Médecins Sans Frontières: MSF Warns of Mental Health Crisis Among Yazidis in Iraq, Oct. 4, 2019
- Human Rights Watch: Nigeria: Army Frees 25 Child Suspects After Abuse Reports, Oct. 4, 2019
- Save the Children: Two Million Children Unable to Return to School in West and Central Africa, Oct. 3, 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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