

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
April 2020

SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

The Secretary-General (SG) is expected to report to the Security Council on the situation in Abyei prior to April 15, pursuant to SCR 2497 (2019). The UN Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA) is mandated through May 15, 2020. In January, the Council issued a press statement [condemning](#) violence between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities in the Kolom area of Abyei on January 22, which resulted in the deaths of approximately 30 civilians, including children, and called for an immediate cessation of violence against civilians. According to UNISFA, [six](#) children who were reported missing after the attack have since been reunited with their families. **The Security Council should:**

- Request an update from the Governments of Sudan and South Sudan on efforts to **jointly investigate and hold accountable those responsible for the January 22 attack** against civilians, including children;
- **Include dedicated child protection advisory capacity within UNISFA's mandate**, including capacity and access to monitor and report on child rights violations in Abyei;
- 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 the SG's annual report for at least one grave violation against children. In April, the Security Council is expected to receive monthly briefings on the humanitarian situation, political process, and use of chemical weapons in Syria. On March 15, the conflict entered its tenth year. According to [UNICEF](#), between 2014, when official monitoring began, and 2019, more than 9,000 children were killed or injured; close to 5,000 children were recruited into the fighting; and nearly 1,000 education and medical facilities came under attack. These numbers represent only verified data, the actual numbers of violations against children are likely much higher. Since December 1, 2019, more than 960,000 people, including 575,000 children, were displaced due to violence in northwest Syria. On March 5, Russia and Turkey reached a ceasefire agreement. Three previous ceasefires have failed. On March 13, the SG's spokesperson [indicated](#) that a summary of the Board of Inquiry (BoI) findings would be shared publicly. In northeast Syria, at least [28,000](#) children from more than 60 countries remain in displacement camps; only 765 children have been repatriated since January 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic could have potentially devastating impacts on displaced children and vulnerable communities across Syria. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law in Syria, and call for perpetrators to be held accountable**, in particular for violations against children and those that may constitute war crimes or crimes against humanity;
- Urge the SG to **make public the conclusions of the BoI in northwest Syria, including attribution** for violations to strengthen future accountability efforts;
- **Demand that all parties allow safe, timely, and unimpeded delivery of principled humanitarian aid** and quality health services to civilians in need, including cross-border and cross-line humanitarian access to Syria;
- 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 **Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) to promptly and fully implement their action plan**, and urge other listed parties to develop and sign action plans to end and prevent violations against children.

Belgium and Germany are the lead countries on humanitarian issues in Syria.

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Mali
Myanmar
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Yemen

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YEMEN

Six parties to conflict are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict for grave violations against children. In April, the Security Council is expected to receive its monthly report on the implementation of SCR 2505 (2020) and SCR 2451 (2018). Following a period of reduced violence in the final months of 2019, the conflict has escalated again since mid-January in Marib, Al Jawf, and Sana'a Governorates. Briefing the Council in March, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Ramesh Rajasingham said civilian casualties have been on the rise in 2020, with children [accounting](#) for one in four casualties. On February 15, air strikes in Al Maslub District, Al Jawf Governorate, killed [26](#) children and injured 18. In addition, the recent violence has displaced at least [40,000](#) people and damaged civilian infrastructure, including hospitals. A recent report by Physicians for Human Rights and Mwatana for Human Rights found at least [120](#) health facilities or personnel were attacked by warring parties in Yemen between March 2015 and December 2018. The attacks documented in the report led to the killing of 10 children and injury of 28. **The Security Council should:**

- Strongly condemn the continuing violence, including grave violations against children such as killing and maiming and recruitment and use of children, and resulting increase in civilian displacement; **urge parties to commit to a full cessation of hostilities and work towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process** that includes meaningful child participation and protection measures, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018);
- Demand the **immediate cessation of indiscriminate attacks, and attacks on hospitals, education facilities, and other protected civilian infrastructure** in violation of IHL;
- Demand all parties to conflict to **allow safe, unimpeded delivery of principled humanitarian aid and quality health services** to all civilians in need, including children, and **ensure any recalibrations of humanitarian funding do not result in the denial of humanitarian assistance to children**;
- **Welcome the adoption of the time-bound workplan of activities** by the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition in December 2019, and **call for its full and swift implementation**;
- Call upon the Government of Yemen to **implement fully and without delay the December 2018 roadmap aimed at revitalizing its action plan to end and prevent child recruitment and use**, immediately release all children within its ranks, and prioritize the establishment of age assessment mechanisms;
- **Urge all other listed parties to sign and implement timebound action plans to end and prevent grave violations**, as the only path towards delisting from the annexes of the SG's annual report on CAAC.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Yemen. **Saint Vincent and the Grenadines** is the lead on the 2140 Sanctions Committee.

Recommendations to the Working Group

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

In October, the Working Group received the SG's [fourth](#) report on children and armed conflict in CAR. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's [January 2020 CAC Monthly Update](#).

COLOMBIA

In January, the Working Group received the SG's [fourth](#) report on children and armed conflict in Colombia. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's [February 2020 CAC Monthly Update](#).

IRAQ

In January, the Working Group received the SG's [third](#) report on children and armed conflict in Iraq. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's [February 2020 CAC Monthly Update](#).

Presidency of the Security Council for April: Dominican Republic

Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I-III, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention 182; has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [More Than 15 Million Children and Their Families in Yemen, Syria, and Gaza Set to Face COVID-19 with Fewer Than 1700 Ventilators and Beds](#), March 30, 2020

Amnesty International, [Burkina Faso: Witness Testimony Confirms Armed Groups Perpetrated Mass Killings](#), March 20, 2020

CARE, [Gender Implications of COVID-19 Outbreaks in Development and Humanitarian Settings](#), March 16, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [Targeted for Going to School in Cameroon](#), March 12, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [ICC Offers Hope to Afghanistan's Victims](#), March 5, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [Renew Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan](#), March 5, 2020

Physicians for Human Rights, ['Chaos and Fire': An Analysis of Sudan's June 3, 2019 Khartoum Massacre](#), March 5, 2020

International Rescue Committee and Norwegian Refugee Council, [Joint Statement on Attacks on Civilians in North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon](#), March 4, 2020

Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, Save the Children, World Vision International, [New Analysis Reveals Scale of Destruction and Displacement in Idlib: Civilians Forced into Shrinking Space as Conflict Intensifies](#), March 4, 2020