

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
August 2020

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) most recent annual report ([S/2020/525](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) 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 SG is expected to report on UNAMI, pursuant to SCR 2522 (2020). UNITAD's current mandate expires in September, pursuant to SCR 2490 (2019). The SG's May report on UNAMI ([S/2020/363](#)) documents two children killed and seven injured between February 1 and April 19. The Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) continues to advocate with the Government of Iraq for the finalization of a draft action plan to end recruitment and use of children and ensure their reintegration. Detention of children allegedly associated with ISIL remains a concern. The SG's annual CAAC report cites 984 children detained on national security-related charges as of December 2019. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew UNITAD's mandate and call for perpetrators to be held accountable for grave violations**, in particular those which may constitute genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes; **urge all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;
- **Urge the Government to adopt and fully implement an action plan** to end and prevent child recruitment and use by the PMF, as well as a comprehensive child rights law criminalizing the recruitment and use of children, and to **strengthen rehabilitation and reintegration**;
- **Call on the Government to intensify its efforts to remove administrative barriers hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid** to children and other civilians in need, and to **issue identification documents to allow all children to access public assistance and basic services**;
- Remind all parties that children – including those actually or allegedly associated with ISIL or other armed groups – **should be treated primarily as victims**, and **urge the Government to develop and prioritize alternatives to detention** whenever possible, ensuring the best interests of the child, in accordance with juvenile justice standards;
- **Call on Member States to facilitate the return of their child nationals** held in Iraq for actual or alleged association with ISIL, and to provide reintegration support in line with international standards and ensuring the best interests of the child.

The **United States** is the lead country on Iraq.

SOMALIA

The Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces (formerly listed as 'Somali National Army') are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use and killing and maiming. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use, and Al Shabaab is listed for all five 'trigger' violations. In August, the SG is expected to report on the situation in Somalia, pursuant to SCR 2527 (2020) and SCR 2520 (2020). In the SG's May periodic report ([S/2020/398](#)), the CTFMR documented 826 grave violations impacting 750 children (600 boys and 150 girls), 13 attacks on schools and hospitals, and nine cases of denial of humanitarian access from February 5 to April 4. A total of 1,283 children (699 boys and 314 girls) were separated from armed forces and groups and handed over to UNICEF partners for rehabilitation and reintegration. According to the SG's annual report on CAAC, Somalia remained among the situations with the highest verified violations in 2019. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations committed against children**, in particular the alarming numbers of children recruited, used, and abducted; **and urge all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- **Call on the Government of Somalia to strengthen accountability for grave violations**, including by adopting the Sexual Offences Bill and the Child Rights Bill, criminalizing the six grave violations against children, and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC);
- Urge the Government to **fully implement its 2012 action plans and 2019 roadmap** on recruitment and use and killing and maiming; and to **consistently comply with its 2014 Standard Operating Procedures for the reception and handover of children associated with armed groups**, including the 72-hour limit to hand children over to child protection actors; and to uphold the Paris Principles and Commitments.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Somalia.

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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Recommendations to the Working Group

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 CAAC Monthly Update](#). In March, the Working Group received the SG's [fifth](#) report on children and armed conflict in **Somalia**. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's [May 2020 CAAC Monthly Update](#).

NIGERIA

In July, the Working Group received the SG's second report ([S/2020/652](#)) on children and armed conflict in Nigeria, covering January 2017 to December 2019. During this period, the CTFMR verified 5,741 grave violations against children in northeast Nigeria, 86 percent of which occurred in Borno State. Boko Haram was the main perpetrator of verified violations, including an additional 623 grave violations spilling over into Cameroon, Niger, and Chad. Children were held in military detention facilities in Giwa and Maimalari barracks for alleged association with Boko Haram, and the UN was denied access to facilities and children during the reporting period. A 2019 Human Rights Watch [report](#), describes "squalid and overcrowded" conditions for children as young as five years old held in military detention, many never formally charged with a crime. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations against children**, in particular recruitment and use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, and increasing denial of humanitarian access; **urge all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL and to allow safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to children and other civilians in need;
- **Welcome progress in identifying, releasing, and reintegrating children** associated with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and prevention of new child recruitment per its 2017 action plan; encourage the CJTF to **fully complete the action plan and facilitate release of any remaining children in its ranks**;
- Remind all parties that children are to be treated primarily as victims, and urge the Government to immediately **release children held in military detention, sign and implement its draft protocol to facilitate release and timely handover of children** allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors, and ensure any prosecution for alleged crimes committed is carried out in line with international standards of juvenile justice;
- **Encourage strengthened accountability for perpetrators** of grave violations against children, in particular for rape and other forms of sexual violence, and **support comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate recovery** and protection for child survivors of sexual violence.

SUDAN

In July, the Working Group received the SG's sixth report ([S/2020/614](#)) on children and armed conflict in Sudan, covering January 2017 to December 2019. During this period, the CTFMR verified 714 grave violations in Darfur, impacting 679 children (388 boys, 291 girls), and 20 grave violations in Southern Kordofan, Blue Nile State, and Abyei. Killing and maiming accounted for nearly two-thirds of all verified violations in Darfur, with many casualties caused by explosive remnants of war. Access restrictions constrained reporting throughout the period. Nearly one-third of all verified violations were attributed to Government security forces, and the report expressed concern about "recurrent reports of child recruitment by the Rapid Support Forces." The report highlighted that the reconfiguration and drawdown of UNAMID forces during the period resulted in reduced child protection capacity and hindered monitoring and reporting efforts. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations against children**, in particular killing and maiming and rape and other forms of sexual violence; **urge the Government to end impunity for perpetrators** of grave violations, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and **support comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate recovery** and protection for child survivors of sexual violence;
- Call on all listed parties to **engage or renew engagement with the UN to develop and implement action plans** to end and prevent grave violations, and encourage parties involved in the Juba peace process to **include provisions on child protection in any agreement**;
- Encourage the Government to continue efforts to improve humanitarian access, and call on non-State armed groups to **allow safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to children and other civilians in need;
- Call for allocation of adequate resources to continue child protection efforts, including monitoring and reporting, in the context of UNAMID withdrawal; **call for an adequately resourced Child Protection Section to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, per SCR 2524 (2020).

Presidency of the Security Council for August: Indonesia

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

NGO RESOURCES

Human Rights Watch, [Sudanese School Closed by Pandemic, Kept Closed by Armed Forces](#), July 29, 2020

Amnesty International, [Legacy of Terror: The Plight of Yazidi Child Survivors of ISIS](#), July 28, 2020

International Rescue Committee, [New Survey Finds Increases in Child Protection Concerns and Unaccompanied Children in Conflict-Affected Countries](#), July 21, 2020

Right to Education Initiative, [Caught in the Crossfire: The Right to Education in Ukraine](#), July 20, 2020

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, [Education under Attack 2020](#), July 9, 2020

Save the Children, [Yemen: Thousands of Children's Lives at Risk as Healthcare Services Plummet](#), July 5, 2020

ChildFund Alliance et al., [Ending Violence against Children and COVID-19](#), July 1, 2020

International Review of the Red Cross, [Keeping schools safe from the battlefield: Why global legal and policy efforts to deter the military use of schools matter](#), June 2020