

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
September 2020

AFGHANISTAN

The Afghan National Police (ANP), including the Afghan Local Police (ALP), are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2020 annual report ([S/2020/525](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC). 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 abduction. Afghanistan remained the deadliest conflict for children in 2019 with over 3,100 verified child casualties. In September, UNAMA's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2489 (2019). According to UNAMA's 2020 mid-year [report](#), the UN verified 1,067 child casualties (340 killed, 727 injured) in the first half of 2020, representing 31 percent of all civilian casualties. The report also noted that children were increasingly vulnerable to recruitment and use during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to the SG's August periodic report ([S/2020/809](#)), in the second quarter of 2020, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 19 cases of recruitment and use, 18 conflict-related incidents involving healthcare facilities or workers, nine attacks against schools, 11 denials of humanitarian access, and continued to note likely underreporting of sexual violence against children. **The Security Council should:**

- Call upon all parties to **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, to respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals, including their personnel, to end and prevent attacks or threats of attacks against those institutions and personnel as well as the military use of schools, and to **facilitate safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance** to children and civilians in need;
- **Renew UNAMA's child protection mandate** and request the creation of a Child Protection Adviser (CPA) position within the Human Rights Unit with the necessary political and operational space to engage with all parties to conflict for the protection of children; in subsequent budget negotiations, **ensure distinct budget lines for the establishment of Child Protection Officer positions to allow UNAMA to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**;
- Urge the Government of Afghanistan to **fully implement its 2011 action plan and 2014 roadmap** to end and prevent child recruitment and use by its security forces, to strengthen the legal and operational framework for the protection of children, and to adopt a standardized referral system for the reintegration of children separated from parties to conflict, released from detention, or rejected from recruitment centers;
- **Strongly urge all parties to take immediate and specific measures to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including cases involving *bacha bazi*, and call upon the Government to hold perpetrators accountable;
- **Call for the protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children affected by armed conflict to be fully incorporated and prioritized in ongoing and future efforts to build and sustain peace**; and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes where possible and compatible with the best interests of the child.

Germany and Indonesia are the lead countries on Afghanistan.

COLOMBIA

The *Ejército de Liberación Nacional* (ELN) is listed in the annexes of the SG's 2020 annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use. In September, the UN Verification Mission's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2487 (2019). Briefing the Council in July, UN Special Representative Carlos Ruiz Massieu highlighted concerning [trends](#), including increased attacks against human rights defenders and local community leaders, as well as rising cases of sexual and gender-based violence and heightened risk of recruitment and use of children in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. In August, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) adopted its latest [conclusions](#) on Colombia. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all armed groups, in particular the ELN and FARC-EP dissidents, **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and end all child recruitment, use, and abductions**;

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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COLOMBIA (cont'd)

- Urge the Government to **continue to strengthen efforts to prevent the recruitment and use** of both Colombian and Venezuelan children, as well as other grave violations, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, including those from indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities;
- Call upon all parties, including State and non-State armed actors, to **abide by their obligations under IHRL and IHL**, including the principles of distinction and proportionality, and to **take measures to protect children during military operations**;
- Express concern over **cases** of sexual violence against children by members of the Colombian Armed Forces, and call on the Government to **ensure comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection** services for child survivors of sexual violence, and to hold perpetrators accountable;
- **Call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the SCWG-CAAC's recommendations** elaborated in its fourth and previous conclusions on Colombia.

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

LIBYA

Libya is a situation of concern in the SG's 2020 annual report on CAAC. In September, UNSMIL's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2486 (2019). In its recent quarterly civilian casualties [report](#), UNSMIL documented at least 358 civilian casualties between April 1 and June 30, a 173 percent increase from the first quarter of 2020. Fifty-two children were among those killed and injured (44 boys and eight girls). The increase in civilian casualties was "driven by a major escalation of hostilities," and indiscriminate attacks and targeting of civilian populated areas remain a concern. UNSMIL also documented continuing attacks on schools and healthcare facilities. Briefing the Council in July, the SG [expressed](#) deep concern about the risks faced by migrants, refugees, and asylum-seekers, urging authorities to find alternatives to detention, and he raised alarm about the seven-fold increase in COVID-19 cases in June alone, noting the true scale of the pandemic is likely higher. In June, the UN Human Rights Council [established](#) an independent fact-finding mission to document alleged violations and abuses of IHL and IHRL by all parties in Libya since the start of 2016. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn and call for an immediate end to all indiscriminate attacks and attacks on civilian infrastructure**, including health facilities and schools – which may amount to war crimes – and demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL; **remind parties that the recruitment and use of children under the age of 18 is a grave violation** and that enlisting children under the age of 15 may amount to a war crime under the Rome Statute;
- **Include dedicated child protection capacity within UNSMIL's mandate**, and ensure sufficient budgetary, personnel, and operational capacity to fully deliver on a child protection mandate;
- **Request the SG to include information on children and armed conflict in his briefings** and reports to the Council, and to **further investigate to determine if parties to conflict in Libya should be listed for grave violations** in his next annual CAAC report;
- Urge all parties to allow **safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance** to children and other civilians in need;
- **Call on the Government to end arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees**, in particular children; to release those unlawfully deprived of their liberty; and to put in place measures to prevent torture or other ill-treatment in detention.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Libya. **Germany** chairs the 1970 Sanctions Committee.

Recommendations to the Working Group

In July, the Working Group received the SG's [second](#) report on children and armed conflict in **Nigeria** and the SG's [sixth](#) report on children and armed conflict in **Sudan**. For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's August 2020 CAAC Monthly Update](#). In August, the Working Group received the SG's [fifth](#) report on children and armed conflict in the **Philippines**.

Presidency of the Security Council for September: Niger

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, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention 182; not a party to Additional Protocol III of the Geneva Conventions. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Safe Schools Declaration; has not endorsed the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Human Rights Watch, [Cameroon: Boko Haram Suicide Bombers Strike Displacement Site](#), August 25, 2020

World Vision, [COVID-19 Aftershocks: Access Denied](#), August 21, 2020

Mwatana for Human Rights, et al., [Undermining the Future: Attacks on Yemen's Schools](#), August 18, 2020

Oxfam, [One Air Raid Every Ten Days on Hospitals, Clinics, Wells, and Water Tanks Throughout Yemen War](#), August 18, 2020

Save the Children, [More Than 100 Children Killed and Injured as Violence Intensifies in Ituri, DRC](#), April 14, 2020

Plan International, [Concern Over Bill Normalizing Violence Against Girls and Women in Somalia](#), August 13, 2020

Save the Children, [The COVID-19 Pandemic and Children Five Months On](#), August 13, 2020

Save the Children, [Syria: Child Death Rate Triples in Al-Hol Camp as Medical Access Deteriorates](#), August 13, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [The UN Secretary-General Is Letting Powerful Countries Get Away With Killing Kids](#), August 10, 2020