

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Anti-balaka local defense militias, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the former Séléka coalition are each listed in the Secretary-General's (SG) 2020 annual report ([S/2020/525](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. Of these, the LRA is also listed for abduction, and the former Séléka coalition and associated groups are also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals. In November, MINUSCA's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2499 (2019). According to the SG's October report ([S/2020/994](#)), COVID-19 has led to verification challenges and a decrease in partners available to support the reintegration of children released from armed groups. During the reporting period, 13 children (two girls, 11 boys) were separated from the *Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC), 22 children (three girls, 19 boys) were verified as associated with the *Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), and nine children escaped the LRA. The UN also documented conflict-related sexual violence affecting 39 girls. From January to September 2020, OCHA recorded [304](#) incidents impacting humanitarian workers in CAR, an increase compared to 2019. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MINUSCA's child protection mandate**, maintain current capacity in the child protection unit to fully deliver on this mandate, and **ensure child protection continues to be prioritized as a cross-cutting issue**, including through the national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, security sector reform, and activities to promote the protection of civilians and rule of law;
- Call for all parties to conflict to engage with the UN to sign and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations against children; urge the MPC, the 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;
- **Condemn all attacks on protected healthcare and humanitarian personnel**, and demand all parties immediately cease such attacks, and **allow safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all children and other civilians in need;
- Remind all parties that children – including those actually or allegedly associated with armed groups – should be treated primarily as victims, and urge the Government to promptly **adopt a protocol for the handover of children** associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict** elaborated in its fourth [conclusions](#) on the situation of children and armed conflict in CAR.

**France is the lead on CAR. Niger chairs the 2127 Sanctions Committee.**

### IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2020 annual report on 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 November, the SG is expected to report on UNAMI, pursuant to SCR 2522 (2020). The SG's August report ([S/2020/792](#)) documents five children injured between May 1 and July 9, and notes ongoing concerns regarding children detained on national security-related charges and child casualties from landmines and explosive remnants of war. On September 28, [four](#) children under the age of 10 were killed and another was injured when a rocket fell on their house in Baghdad. In October, the Protection Cluster in Iraq released an [analysis](#) on the impacts of COVID-19, noting that survey respondents reported that protection issues involving children had significantly increased since the pandemic. Administrative [access](#) challenges continue to impact the ability of humanitarian actors to deliver assistance and services to children. In July, the SCWG-CAAC adopted its third [conclusions](#) on children and armed conflict in Iraq. **The Security Council should:**

- 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;

## Monthly Update: November 2020

### 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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## IRAQ (cont'd)

- Call on Member States to **facilitate the return of their child nationals** held in Iraq for their or their family members' actual or alleged association with ISIL, and to provide reintegration support in line with international standards and ensuring the best interests of the child;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its third conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict in Iraq.

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 November, elements of the 751 Somalia sanctions regime and mandate of the Panel of Experts on Somalia will expire, pursuant to SCR 2498 (2019). The SG's periodic reports on UNSOM and AMISOM are also expected in November, pursuant to SCR 2527 (2020) and 2520 (2020), respectively. Briefing the Human Rights Council in September, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **expressed** concern at reports of increased rape and sexual violence against women, girls, and boys, with little investigation. In August, the SCWG-CAAC adopted its fifth **conclusions** on children and armed conflict in Somalia. **The Security Council should:**

- Urge all parties to **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and request the SG to include dedicated child rights expertise in the Panel of Experts;
- **Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to strengthen accountability for all grave violations** committed against children, including by adopting the Sexual Offences Bill and the Child Rights Bill and ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC); and to **ensure comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection** services for child survivors of sexual violence;
- Urge the Federal 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;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its fifth conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict in Somalia.

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

## SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

In November, UNISFA's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2519 (2020). The SG's April report ([S/2020/308](#)) notes an increase in intercommunal violence, resulting in 14 children injured in armed attacks. The report also documents cases of rape and sexual violence affecting five children. The SG's October report ([S/2020/1019](#)) states that "protection, in particular of children and against gender-based violence, remained the key challenge because of the limited resources available." **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations against children**, call for perpetrators to be held accountable, and urge all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL;
- **Renew its call to sustain adequate child protection expertise in UNISFA**, and ensure dedicated capacity and access to monitor and report on child rights violations in Abyei.

The **United States** is the lead country on Sudan/South Sudan.

## Recommendations to the Working Group

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

## Presidency of the Security Council for November: Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

*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. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments nor the Vancouver Principles. In September, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines became the 105th country to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.*

## NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Defenseless: The Impact of the Israeli Military Detention System on Palestinian Children](#), October 29, 2020

Plan International, [Statement: Cameroon School Shooting](#), October 26, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [Rohingya: Donors Should Require Including Education](#), October 22, 2020

World Vision, [Complex Crisis, Broken Childhood: The Situation for Children Affected by Conflict and Fragility in the Central Sahel](#), October 18, 2020

Action on Armed Violence, [The Impact of Explosive Weapons on Children in Syria](#), October 16, 2020

International Rescue Committee, [Nearly 500 Children Sent to Libyan Detention Centers in Past Six Months](#), October 8, 2020

Action on Armed Violence, [The Impact of Explosive Violence on Children in Yemen](#), October 4, 2020

Save the Children, [Spike in Killing and Recruitment of Children and Youth in Colombia](#), October 1, 2020