

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
January 2021

LIBYA

Libya is a situation of concern in the Secretary-General's (SG) 2020 annual report on children and armed conflict (CAAC). In January, the SG is expected to report on UNSMIL, pursuant to SCR 2542 (2020), which expanded UNSMIL's child protection mandate. A nationwide ceasefire agreement was signed by the warring parties on October 23 following UN-facilitated talks. The Council has [called](#) on the parties to abide by their commitments and implement the agreement in full. Briefing the Council in November, Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), Fatuo Bensouda [called](#) for a recommitment to bring perpetrators of the worst atrocity crimes to justice. According to the SG's latest report on Libya ([S/2020/876](#)), migrants and refugees remain vulnerable to grave human rights violations, including child rights violations, in detention centers, with COVID-19 further exacerbating risks. Between March and September 2020, nearly [500](#) children intercepted at sea and returned to Libya were sent to detention centers, according to data from the International Rescue Committee. The COVID-19 pandemic has also severely impacted child immunization schedules, with UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO) warning that severe vaccine shortages have left [250,000](#) children at risk of illness or death from preventable diseases. On December 2, a 16-year-old boy was [killed](#), and two other children were injured, in an attack as they left their school in the city of Al Ajaylat. **The Security Council should:**

- Reiterate its **call for parties to abide by their ceasefire commitments and fully implement the agreement**, and call on all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and international human rights law (IHRL);
- **Urge all parties to allow full, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance** and health services 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;
- **Call for allocation of adequate resources to allow UNSMIL to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, including through the urgent deployment of a Child Protection Adviser, per SCR 2542 (2020);
- **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, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the 2020 [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#).

The United Kingdom is the lead country on Libya.

YEMEN

Government forces, including Yemeni armed forces, and four non-State armed groups are listed for violations against children in the annexes of the SG's 2020 annual report on CAAC. In January, the Council will receive its monthly briefing on the implementation of Resolutions 2534 (2020) and 2451 (2018). A food insecurity assessment released in December warned that [16.2](#) million people including 7.35 million children, could face high levels of acute food insecurity by June 2021, leaving over [20,000](#) children at risk of falling into famine. UNICEF has [warned](#) that famine-like conditions have already begun for some children. The Council has [expressed](#) alarm at this assessment, calling on donors to urgently disburse outstanding pledges and urging all parties to urgently facilitate full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access. The Council also strongly condemned military escalation in Yemen, called for implementation of the global ceasefire appeal detailed in SCR 2532 (2020), and reiterated the need to protect children and uphold obligations under IHL. In just three days in late November, [11](#) children – including a one-month-old baby – were reported killed and three others injured, in two separate attacks. **The Security Council should:**

- **Reiterate its strong condemnation of escalating violence, including violations against children**, and its demand for a general and immediate cessation of hostilities, in line with the SG's appeal for a global ceasefire, per SCR 2532 (2020), respect for IHL, and full, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access;

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 (cont'd)

- Urge parties to work towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process that includes meaningful child participation and protection measures, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the 2020 [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- As recommended by the UN Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts (GEE), refer the situation in Yemen to the ICC to ensure accountability for acts that may amount to war crimes, and invite the GEE to brief the Council;
- Call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, as elaborated in its [second](#) conclusions on the situation of children and armed conflict in Yemen, in particular the need for parties to sign and fully implement action plans with the UN to address and prevent grave violations of children's rights;
- Call for an impartial, transparent, and objective assessment, which includes meaningful consultation with civil society and other stakeholders, of how the SG applied the criteria for de-listing as set forth in the 2010 annual report (A/73/907-S/2010/181), pursuant to SCR 1882 (2009), in his decision to remove the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition from the annexes of his 2020 annual report.

The United Kingdom is the lead country on Yemen.

Recommendations to the Working Group

SOUTH SUDAN

In December, the Working Group received the SG's third report (S/2020/1205) on children and armed conflict in South Sudan, covering the period from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2020. During this period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 708 grave violations, affecting 618 children (431 boys, 178 girls, 9 unknown sex). The most prevalent violation was recruitment and use, as children were recruited to boost numbers when conflict intensified, new armed groups emerged, and during the training of unified armed forces. Nearly half of these children (48 percent) were used in combat roles. The CTFMR also verified 98 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, with Government security forces found responsible for 75 of these violations. Impunity for violations committed against children remains widespread. During the reporting period, parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) signed a [Comprehensive Action Plan](#) to end and prevent all grave violations against children. **The Working Group should:**

- Welcome the signing of the Comprehensive Action Plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children, and urge all parties to the R-ARCSS to ensure its swift and full implementation, to immediately cease recruiting and using children, and to release and hand over to child protection actors all children from their ranks;
- Welcoming the Joint Verification Committee's work to identify and release children from armed forces and armed groups, call on the Government of South Sudan to prioritize the reintegration of formerly associated children and to ensure that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) processes and security sector reform fully take into account the specific needs of girls and boys and the protection of their rights; and in this regard, encourage the Government to endorse the Paris Principles;
- Strongly condemn all incidents of rape and sexual violence committed against children, including by Government security forces, and urge all parties to take immediate and specific steps to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, including by ensuring perpetrators are held accountable and that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection;
- Express grave concern at the lack of accountability for grave violations, and urge the Government to end impunity through rigorous, timely, independent, and impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution, and by coordinating with the African Union to establish the Hybrid Court for South Sudan, per Chapter V of the R-ARCSS;
- Call on all parties to cease attacks on and military use of schools, and urge the Government to fulfill its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration.

Presidency of the Security Council for January: Tunisia

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 endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Vancouver Principles; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO RESOURCES

Human Rights Watch, [Nigeria: Stop Jailing Children for Alleged Boko Haram Ties](#), December 16, 2020

Action on Armed Violence, [The Impact of Explosive Violence on a Child's Access to Healthcare](#), December 15, 2020

Save the Children, [COVID's Kids: Repaying Our Debt to the COVID Generation](#), December 14, 2020

Save the Children, ['School Turned into Nightmare After Attack in Nigeria,'](#) December 14, 2020

Human Rights Watch, [Iraq: Steps Toward Justice for ISIS Child Suspects](#), December 13, 2020

Plan International, [Central Sahel Facing Crisis as Violence Against Girls Continues to Rise](#), December 11, 2020

Watchlist, [A Path to Reintegration: The Role of Handover Protocols in Protecting the Rights of Children Formerly Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups](#), December 8, 2020

Plan International, [Ethiopia Conflict: Urgent Support Needed for Unaccompanied Child Refugees in Sudan](#), December 3, 2020

Plan International, [Technical Note: Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups](#), December 3, 2020