

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
February 2021

SOMALIA

The Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces (formerly listed as 'Somali National Army' and now including the Somali Police Force) are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2020/525](#)) on children and armed conflict (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 February, the SG is expected to report on UNSOM and AMISOM, pursuant to Resolutions 2540 (2020) and 2520 (2020), respectively. According to the SG's periodic report from November ([S/2020/1113](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) documented 945 grave violations affecting 1,254 children (1,017 boys, 237 girls), 11 attacks on schools, one attack on a hospital, and one incident of denial of humanitarian access between August 5 and November 4, 2020. Conflict-related sexual violence impacted 66 children (two boys, 64 girls) during the reporting period. In August, 33 boys were apprehended by Government Forces during a security operation and were subsequently released and reunited with their families. **The Security Council should:**

- Express grave concern over reports of increased killing, maiming, rape, and other forms of sexual violence against children, as well as continuing high levels of recruitment and use and abduction; and urge all parties to **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;
- Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**, to enact the Child Rights Bill, to ratify 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 children impacted by armed conflict, including 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**, including by the Somali Police Force; 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

Four non-State armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2020 annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use of children. In February, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of UNITAMS' mandate, pursuant to SCR 2524 (2020). In December, the Council adopted Resolution 2559 (2020), terminating the mandate of UNAMID and initiating the withdrawal of its personnel. In January, intercommunal violence in Darfur [reportedly](#) left 250 people dead, including at least [10](#) children and [three](#) humanitarian workers, and at least [300](#) people wounded, including seven children. According to OCHA, reported incidents of intercommunal violence in Darfur [doubled](#) during the second half of 2020, as compared to the same period in 2019. Briefing the Council in December, Prosecutor Fatou Bensouda of the International Criminal Court (ICC) [noted](#) that her office continues to monitor allegations of repeated attacks on civilians in Darfur, as well as continuing reports of sexual- and gender-based violence and crimes against children. **The Security Council should:**

- Condemn all grave violations against children, particularly reports of killing and maiming and sexual violence in Darfur; and demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- 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 on the Government to **swiftly and fully implement its National Plan on Protection of Civilians**; and urge all listed parties who have not already done so to engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**;

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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SUDAN (cont'd)

- **Call for the swift deployment of adequate child protection resources** to allow UNITAMS to fully and promptly deliver on its child protection mandate, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations, per SCR 2524 (2020), noting that UNAMID's child protection section will close by mid-February 2021;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC elaborated in its sixth [conclusions](#)** on children and armed conflict in the Sudan.

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

Recommendations to the Working Group

In December, the Working Group received the SG's third report on children and armed conflict in South Sudan ([S/2020/1205](#)). For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's January 2021 CAAC Monthly Update](#).

MYANMAR

In January, the Working Group received the SG's sixth report ([S/2020/1243](#)) on children and armed conflict in Myanmar, covering the period from September 1, 2018, to June 30, 2020. During this period, the CTFMR verified 994 grave violations, against 974 children (845 boys, 123 girls, 6 unknown sex). Most documented violations (78 percent) took place in Rakhine State. Recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children were the predominant violations verified by the CTFMR, including alarming spikes since the end of 2019 due to intensified armed clashes between the Myanmar Armed Forces (Tatmadaw) and non-State armed groups. During the reporting period, 587 children were verified as recruited and used by the Tatmadaw (583) and Border Guard Police (4), including 301 boys used in the first half of 2020 – far exceeding the 205 verified cases of recruitment and use by the Tatmadaw in 2019. In the SG's 2020 report on CAAC, the Tatmadaw was removed from the annexed list of perpetrators for recruitment and use, "conditioned on the immediate ending and preventing of the ad hoc use of children in non-combat roles [...] Any failure in this regard would result in a relisting for the same violation" in the SG's next annual report. The CTFMR also verified 20 attacks on schools, hospitals, and their personnel, including 12 attributed to the Tatmadaw. Government Forces were found responsible for 71 incidents of military use of schools. The first quarter of 2020 saw a threefold increase in the number of verified child casualties as compared to the last quarter of 2019. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all grave violations against children**, in particular continuing recruitment and use and killing and maiming, and call on all parties to **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Call for **perpetrators of grave violations against children to be held accountable**, including through timely, impartial, and transparent investigations, and where appropriate, prosecution;
- Welcoming the signature of a joint UN action plan on ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children by the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army in November 2020, urge all listed parties who have not already done so to engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**;
- Urge the Government to **sign and implement a joint UN action plan to end and prevent killing and maiming and rape and other forms of sexual violence**, violations for which the Tatmadaw remains listed;
- Call on all parties to immediately **cease attacks on schools and their personnel, and urge the Government to end all military use of schools** and to ensure that attacks on schools and related protected personnel are investigated and that those responsible are duly prosecuted; encourage the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration;
- **Call on the SG to re-list the Tatmadaw in the annexes of his 2021 annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use of children**, and ensure continued engagement by his Special Representative on CAAC to end and prevent all recruitment and use of children, including in non-combat roles, and sustain gains made from the implementation of the 2012 action plan.

NGO RESOURCES

Human Rights Watch, [ICC to Rule on Lord's Resistance Army Leader](#), January 27, 2021

ACTED, et al., [Aid Agencies Make Unprecedented Call for Biden Administration to Revoke Ansar Allah Terrorist Designation](#), January 24, 2021

Save the Children, [Revealed: 10 Million Afghan Children Need Life-Saving Help](#), January 19, 2021

Action on Armed Violence, [The Impact of Explosive Weapons on Children's Physical Health](#), January 18, 2021

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Mounting Hostilities Disrupt Aid Delivery in the Central African Republic](#), January 15, 2021

Action on Armed Violence, [The Impact of Explosive Weapons on Children's Psychological Health](#), January 12, 2021

Save the Children, [Deadly Start of 2021 for Children in the Sahel](#), January 6, 2021

Presidency of the Security Council for February: United Kingdom

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 Vancouver Principles, and the Safe Schools Declaration.