

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
August 2021

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed for recruiting and using children in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report on children and armed conflict (CAAC), and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is listed for all five 'trigger' violations. In August, the SG will report on the implementation of UNAMI's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2576 (2021), which included [expanded](#) language on child protection, specifically, noting that children affected by armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims and calling for implementation of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) [conclusions](#) on Iraq. According to the SG's May periodic report (S/2021/426), 12 children were killed and 15 injured in the first quarter of 2021. In his latest annual report on CAAC, the SG expressed continued concern about child casualties caused by improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and explosive remnants of war (ERW), as well as the situation of children detained on national security-related charges. As of December 31, 2020, 1,114 children remained detained on such charges, including for their actual or alleged association with armed groups. In July, an [explosion](#) at a market in Baghdad reportedly killed at least 30 people, including children. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on the Government to **develop and implement an action plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children by the PMF**, and call on the Inter-ministerial Committee on Monitoring and Reporting on Grave Child Rights Violations to resume consultations with the United Nations;
- Call on the Government to **intensify efforts to remove administrative barriers hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid** to civilians, including children, to **issue identification documents to allow all children to access public assistance and basic services**, to **implement international legal instruments on IEDs, landmines, and other ERW**, and to promote mine clearance and mine risk education;
- Recalling that **children should be treated primarily as victims**, including children formerly or allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist, their reintegration should be prioritized, and detention should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time, call on the Government to **endorse the Paris Principles and Commitments**, and **encourage the adoption and implementation of a handover protocol** to facilitate the release of children to child protection actors for their reintegration;
- Call on Member States to **facilitate the return of their nationals**, including children of their nationals, held for their or their family members' actual or alleged association with ISIL and other armed groups, and to **provide reintegration support in line with international standards** and ensuring the best interests of the child;
- Encourage the Government to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**, ensuring accountability and redress for attacks on education.

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

MYANMAR

The Myanmar Armed Forces, known as the Tatmadaw Kyi ('Tatmadaw'), including integrated border guard forces, are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC. After being removed from the list for recruitment and use last year, despite continuing violations, the Tatmadaw was re-listed for this violation after a more than 350 percent increase in verified cases from 2019 (205) to 2020 (726). Following the February 1 military coup, the SG's [Special Representatives](#) for CAAC and on Violence against Children, [UNICEF](#), and others have expressed alarm at the number of children who have been killed, injured, or arbitrarily detained, as well as widespread attacks on schools, health facilities, and protected personnel. More than [200](#) organizations have called on the Security Council to impose a comprehensive global arms embargo on Myanmar to help prevent further human rights violations. According to a [statement](#) by the UN Child Rights Committee, since the military coup, 75 children have been killed, about 1,000 arbitrarily detained, and countless more exposed to indiscriminate violence and deprived of essential medical care and education. [Access](#) to and delivery of humanitarian assistance remains heavily restricted – additionally concerning amidst a recent surge in [COVID-19](#) cases. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all ongoing grave violations of children's rights** in Myanmar, call for perpetrators to be held accountable, and demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;

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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MYANMAR (cont'd)

- Call on the Tatmadaw to continue implementing the 2012 joint action plan on non-recruitment of children, to **immediately end the recruitment and use of children including in non-combat roles**, and urge all listed parties to **sign and implement joint action plans with the UN to end and prevent grave violations**, including the Tatmadaw for sexual violence and killing and maiming;
- **Urge the immediate release of all detained children**, recalling that children should only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time, per the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- **Call for an immediate cessation of attacks on schools, health facilities, and protected personnel**, and **urge the Tatmadaw to end all military use of such facilities** and to ensure that attacks on these institutions and related protected personnel are investigated and that perpetrators are duly prosecuted;
- Reiterate calls for **safe and unimpeded access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all civilians in need, including children.

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

SOMALIA

Al-Shabaab is listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for all five 'trigger' violations, and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use. This year, the Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces were newly listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence and remain listed for recruitment and use and killing and maiming. The SG expressed serious concern at the staggering numbers of grave violations, in particular, the recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction of children, as well as the rising level of sexual violence attributed to the Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces. In August, UNSOM's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2540 (2020). According to the SG's periodic report from May ([S/2021/485](#)), 460 grave violations against children were verified between February 10 and May 7, including five attacks against schools and hospitals and six cases of denial of humanitarian access. At least 192 children were abducted, 216 were recruited and used, 104 were killed or maimed, and 61 girls were subjected to rape or other forms of sexual violence. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn the alarmingly high numbers of grave violations committed against children** in Somalia, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**, to enact the Child Rights Bill and the original 2018 Sexual Offences Bill, to ratify the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, as well as to adopt and implement the African Committee of Experts' General Comment on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict, and to **treat children actually or allegedly associated with armed groups primarily as victims**, in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments;
- Encourage the Federal Government to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**, developing comprehensive risk assessments and risk reduction strategies to prevent and respond to attacks, including child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school;
- Urge the Federal Government to **fully implement its 2012 action plans on recruitment and use and killing and maiming and 2019 roadmap**, which includes provisions on sexual violence against children, including by the Somali Police Force, and to swiftly engage with the UN to develop and implement an action plan to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; and to **consistently comply with its 2014 Standard Operating Procedures**, including the 72-hour limit to hand children over to child protection actors;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its fifth [conclusions](#) on Somalia.

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

Recommendations to the Working Group

In January, the Working Group received the SG's sixth report on children and armed conflict in Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)). For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's February 2021 CAAC Monthly Update](#). In May, the Working Group received the SG's third report on children and armed conflict in Syria ([S/2021/398](#)). For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's June 2021 CAAC Monthly Update](#).

Presidency of the Security Council for August: India

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 to the Geneva Conventions, nor the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Vancouver Principles, nor the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Number of Children Killed or Injured in Afghanistan Rose More than 55 Percent in First Half of 2021](#), July 26, 2021

Save the Children, [Conflict in Ethiopia's Tigray Region](#), July 22, 2021

ChildFund Alliance, et al., [United Nations High-Level Political Forum Ministerial Declaration Is a Missed Opportunity for Transformative Language on Children's Participation](#), July 22, 2021

Médecins Sans Frontières, [CAR: Repeated Attacks on Medical Facilities Leave Thousands Without Care](#), July 19, 2021

Save the Children, [North East Syria: Repatriations Show Giving Children A Future Is Possible with Political Will](#), July 19, 2021

World Vision, [Statement on the Adoption of UNSC Resolution 2585](#), July 9, 2021