

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:  
November 2021

### 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 annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2021 annual report ([S/2021/437](#)) 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 2552 (2020). According to the SG's October periodic report ([S/2021/867](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 52 cases of sexual violence against children, 24 children killed or maimed, and 13 attacks against schools and hospitals between June and October 2021. Additionally, 10 schools were newly used for military purposes and 131 children (116 boys, 15 girls) were separated from armed groups. In his 2021 annual report on CAAC, the SG welcomed positive developments such as the promulgation of the Child Protection Code, criminalizing child recruitment and use, and the conviction of 110 perpetrators of violations against children, while also expressing concern at the sharp increase in some grave violations, including by those who have signed action plans. The SG continued to urge the Government to submit its initial report on the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and to adopt a handover protocol. **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 on all parties to take immediate and specific steps to **end and prevent all grave violations committed against children**, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, to fully implement all aspects of the Child Protection Code, and to ensure perpetrators are held accountable and that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection;
- **Urge the adoption and implementation of a handover protocol** to facilitate the release of children to civilian child protection actors, prioritizing their reintegration in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments, which the Government has endorsed;
- 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;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict** (SCWG-CAAC) elaborated in its fourth [conclusions](#) on the situation of children and armed conflict in CAR.

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

### SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

In November, UNISFA's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2575 (2021). The SG's October periodic report ([S/2021/881](#)) cites protection, in particular of children, and against gender-based violence, as a key challenge because of limited resources and capacity. The Global Protection Cluster was reactivated in February 2021, including its sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, and mine action subclusters, to address protection needs in a more coordinated manner jointly with communities and UNISFA. Between April and October, 13 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported, including cases involving eight child survivors. In October, the Security Council issued a press [statement](#) expressing grave concern over developments in Gok Machar, including threats to the safety and security of peacekeepers, and continued obstacles to the full implementation of UNISFA's mandate. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew its call to sustain adequate child protection expertise in UNISFA**, including throughout the transition phase, and ensure dedicated capacity and access to monitor and report on child rights violations in Abyei;

### 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/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI) (cont'd)

- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be fully incorporated and prioritized in ongoing and future efforts to build and sustain peace at the community level**, drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#); and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes where possible and compatible with the child's best interests;
- **Ensure that child protection is appropriately considered and prioritized in ongoing efforts to develop an exit strategy for UNISFA**, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations committed against children in Abyei, building on lessons learned, and consulting with the relevant child protection experts.

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

## 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 April, 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](#). In August, the Working Group received the SG's fifth report on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's [September 2021 CAAC Monthly Update](#).

## YEMEN

In September, the Working Group received the SG's third report on children and armed conflict in Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)), covering the reporting period from January 2019 to December 2020. During this period, the CTFMR verified 8,526 grave violations committed against 3,503 children (2,698 boys, 805 girls) – a significant increase in the number of violations per year as compared to the previous report ([S/2019/453](#)). Access restrictions due to insecurity, threats, and movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic presented challenges to monitoring and verification during the reporting period. The most prevalent violations were denial of humanitarian access (4,881), killing and maiming (1,889 boys, 723 girls), and recruitment and use (789 boys, 72 girls). The Houthis were found responsible for the majority of verified violations (62 percent), followed by Yemeni armed forces (12 percent) and the Saudi- and Emirati-led Coalition (7 percent). The CTFMR also verified 14 incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, 72 attacks on schools (37) and hospitals (35), 80 incidents of military use of schools, and 86 abductions. At least 111 boys were deprived of their liberty for their alleged association with opposing parties to conflict. Mortar and artillery shelling, ground fighting, and mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) were the main causes of child casualties.

**The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all violations and abuses committed against children in Yemen**, demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, taking concrete measures to prevent and, in any case, minimize child casualties, and **call for immediate and concrete steps to hold all perpetrators accountable**;
- Reiterate demands for a **general and immediate cessation of hostilities**, in line with the SG's appeal for a global ceasefire, per SCR 2532 (2020) and SCR 2565 (2021), and **call on parties to urgently 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 [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- Demand that all parties **facilitate immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid** to children and other civilians in need;
- Remind all parties that **children associated with armed groups should be treated primarily as victims**, including those children actually or allegedly associated with groups designated as terrorist and those children who may have committed crimes; their reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards; and **detention of children should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time**;
- Call on the Government of Yemen to **implement fully and without delay the 2018 roadmap aimed at revitalizing its action plan** to end and prevent child recruitment and use; call on the Coalition to fully and swiftly implement its 2019 memorandum of understanding and related program of activities; and urge all parties to conflict who have not already done so to **engage with the UN to sign and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations** against children.

## Presidency of the Security Council for November: Mexico

*Party to the Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I and 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; not a party to Additional Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Vancouver Principles, and in April 2021 became the 108th Member State to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.*

## NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [We Do Not Want to Be Scared Any Longer: Children's Manifesto Presented at the Fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration](#), October 27, 2021

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, [Protecting Schools from Military Use: 2021 – Law, Policy, and Military Doctrine](#), October 22, 2021

Human Rights Watch, [Afghanistan: Asylum Seekers Need Pathways to Protection](#), October 21, 2021

ChildFund Alliance, [Forward Strong: Ensuring Children Remained Safe, Healthy, and Able to Learn During the Pandemic](#), October 13, 2021

Mwatana for Human Rights, [UN Human Rights Council Member States' Abject Failure to Renew Yemen Investigation Is a Wake-up Call](#), October 13, 2021

War Child UK, [Being a Force for Good: How the UK's Military Partnerships Can Better Protect Children in Conflict](#), October 12, 2021

Save the Children, [Myanmar: More Than 76,000 Children Displaced by Violence Since Coup, with Pregnant Women Forced to Give Birth in Forest](#), October 4, 2021