

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Thirteen parties are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2021 annual report ([S/2021/437](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for grave violations against children, including the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In December, MONUSCO's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2556 (2020). According to the SG's September periodic report ([S/2021/807](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 462 grave violations against children between June and August, including 45 child casualties (17 girls, 28 boys). During the reporting period, 39 children were newly recruited, while 127 children were voluntarily released from armed groups pursuant to roadmaps to end and prevent grave violations. Additionally, Mai-Mai Mutetezi's commander signed a unilateral declaration and roadmap to end and prevent child recruitment and other grave violations. Finally, the UN documented 98 cases (97 girls, one boy) of sexual violence against children. In November, Save the Children reported [6,500](#) child refugees had newly arrived in Uganda after fleeing rising violence in North Kivu and called for additional funding for local response capacity. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MONUSCO's child protection mandate**, preserving the Child Protection Unit's existing capacity, and ensuring the senior Child Protection Adviser continues to have direct access to senior mission leadership and political and operational space to engage with all parties to conflict, including non-State armed groups; **maintain distinct budget lines for child protection;**
- **Ensure that the critical role of the Child Protection Unit is maintained during MONUSCO's drawdown**, and encourage the use of indicators on child protection, developed with meaningful participation of civil society stakeholders to inform decision making on future child protection capacity in the Mission;
- Urge all parties to **immediately cease recruiting and using children**, to release those within their ranks, to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL), and if they have not yet done so, engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations;**
- Call on 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 of grave violations against children are held accountable and that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection; **call on the Government to accelerate efforts to implement aspects of its 2012 action plan relating to sexual violence and the Joint Communique signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict;**
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC)** elaborated in its seventh [conclusions](#) on the situation of children and armed conflict in DRC.

France is the lead country on DRC. Niger chairs the 1533 Sanctions Committee.

MALI

Three armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2021 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children. Of these, *Ansar Eddine* and *Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad* are also listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In December, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of MINUSMA's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2584 (2021), which is the first Security Council resolution to mention the Safe Schools Declaration. According to the SG's October report ([S/2021/844](#)), the number of documented grave violations against children increased from 172 in the previous reporting period to 228 violations, including 55 children (37 boys, 12 girls, 6 unknown sex) killed or maimed, 82 children (74 boys, 8 girls) recruited and used, and two cases of rape or other sexual violence against children. Insecurity has consistently led to an increasing number of school closures in 2021, with [1,595](#) schools closed in June, affecting some 478,500 students. In August, the Platform [signed](#) action plans to end and prevent child recruitment and use, as well as other grave violations. **The Security Council should:**

- Urge the transitional Government to **strengthen the legal framework on child protection and reinforce efforts to hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable**, including by finalizing the revision of the Child Protection Code and conducting timely and impartial investigations and prosecutions; ensure provision of **comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response for child survivors;**

Monthly Update: December 2021

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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MALI (cont'd)

- Call on all transitional Government and international actors to **ensure that counterterrorism operations fully uphold obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and call for **continued and full implementation of the 2013 handover protocol**, including for children allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist, treating children primarily as victims, prioritizing their reintegration, as guided by the Paris Principles;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks on schools and education personnel** and urge the Government to continue to uphold its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration; encourage the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* and the Platform to swiftly and fully implement their respective action plans;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its third [conclusions](#) on children and armed conflict in Mali.

France is the lead country on Mali. Mexico chairs the 2374 Sanctions Committee.

Recommendations to the Working Group

Since January, the Working Group has received the SG's reports on children and armed conflict in Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), in Syria ([S/2021/398](#)), in Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), and in Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's 2021 Monthly CAAC updates from [February](#), [June](#), [September](#), and [November](#), respectively.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

In November, the Working Group received the SG's fifth report on children and armed conflict in CAR ([S/2021/882](#)), covering July 2019 to June 2021. During this period, the CTFMR verified 1,663 grave violations committed against 1,280 children (727 boys, 553 girls), an increase from the previous report ([S/2019/852](#)) which covered a longer period. The most prominent violation was recruitment and use (845), which saw the greatest rise in verified cases since the previous report. Most of these children (653) were released from armed groups, particularly from those groups who had signed action plans, following dialogue with the CTFMR. The CTFMR also successfully advocated for the release of 11 boys who had been detained for their alleged association with armed groups. Sexual violence and denial of humanitarian access also increased, while killing and maiming, abductions, and attacks on schools and hospitals decreased slightly. Attacks on schools and hospitals have risen again since the end of 2020. The CTFMR verified 51 cases of military use of schools, with 13 still occupied (mostly by armed forces and bilaterally deployed and other security personnel) as of June 2021. Armed groups were responsible for 82 percent of verified violations, armed forces and bilaterally deployed and other security personnel were found responsible for five percent, and 13 percent of violations could not be attributed. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all violations and abuses committed against children in CAR**, demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and call for **safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all civilians in need, including children;
- Welcoming the adoption of the Child Protection Code criminalizing all six grave violations, **call for all perpetrators to be held accountable**, including for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, and for the **provision of comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response for child survivors**;
- 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 UPC to fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans to end and prevent grave violations and release all children still in their ranks;
- Recalling that children associated with parties to conflict should be treated primarily as victims, 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;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks on schools and education personnel** and to **take concrete measures to mitigate and avoid the military use of schools**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021); encourage the Government to **uphold its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**.

Presidency of the Security Council for December: Niger

Party to the 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; not a party to Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Safe Schools Declaration; has not endorsed the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Stop the War on Children: A Crisis of Recruitment](#), November 30, 2021

Plan International, [In Harm's Way: Adolescent Girls in Northwest Syria](#), November 25, 2021

Save the Children, [Save the Children Strongly Condemns Assault on School Students](#), November 17, 2021

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect et al., [Asia Justice Coalition Condemns the Escalating Military Abuses in Chin State and Neighboring Regions](#), November 12, 2021

Cluster Munition Coalition and International Campaign to Ban Landmines, [Landmine Action Monitor 2021](#), November 10, 2021

Human Rights Watch, [Ethiopia: International Action Needed to Prevent Atrocities](#), November 8, 2021

Save the Children, [Services to Children Will Be Hit Hard By Outlawing Six Palestinian Groups in the West Bank](#), November 8, 2021

ACTED et al., [Aid Agencies: Protect Civilians from Devastating Impacts of the Conflict in and around Marib](#), November 3, 2021

Amnesty International, [Iraq: Yezidi Reparations Law Progress Welcome, but More Must Be Done to Assist Survivors](#), November 2, 2021

Plan International, [We Welcome UN Security Council Vow to Protect Education from Attack](#), November 2, 2021