

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
April 2022

LIBYA

Libya is a situation of concern in the Secretary-General's (SG) 2021 annual report ([S/2021/437](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC). In April, UNSMIL's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2619 (2022). According to the SG's January UNSMIL report ([S/2022/31](#)), children continue to be held without legal basis in military detention facilities in eastern Libya. Migrant and refugee children continue to face heightened risks, with the UN receiving credible reports of trafficking and sexual abuse against women and children, including conflict-related sexual violence and rape in detention facilities. Operations by Libyan authorities in October 2021 reportedly impacted at least 1,000 migrant and refugee women and children, resulting in family separation, and children remain missing. On February 1, an unidentified armed group reportedly fired shots near the entrance to a primary [school](#), leading to the injury of one child and the temporary suspension of classes. The UN has received reports of [two](#) children killed and one injured by explosive remnants of war (ERW). Last year, the UN verified [26](#) children killed or injured due to ERW. **The Security Council should:**

- Urge all parties to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL) and to **continue to take steps towards the full implementation of the ceasefire agreement**; express concern over the continued threat that ERW pose to civilians, particularly children;
- Reiterating concern for ongoing grave violations committed against children in Libya despite the ceasefire, **call on all parties to take immediate action to stop and prevent such violations**, including all killing and maiming, recruitment and use, and cross-border trafficking of children;
- Urge all parties to **facilitate safe, timely, and unimpeded humanitarian access**, including to detention centers and disembarkation points, in order to provide assistance to children, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets;
- Call on the Libyan authorities to **end arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees**, in particular children; to release those unlawfully detained; and to immediately put in place measures to prevent torture, sexual violence, or other ill-treatment in detention;
- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be prioritized and fully incorporated in ongoing efforts to build inclusive, sustainable peace**, and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes, where possible and compatible with their best interests, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#).

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

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 April, the Council is expected to discuss the SG's latest report on the implementation of MINUSMA's mandate. According to the SG's January MINUSMA report ([S/2021/1117](#)), the UN recorded an increase in grave violations against children from the previous reporting period. The UN verified cases of recruitment and use (102), killing and maiming (22), rape and sexual violence (16), attacks on schools (26), and denial of humanitarian access (57). 91 children were separated from armed groups and handed over to civilian child protection actors. At least 1,664 schools remained non-functional, mostly due to insecurity, affecting at least 499,200 children. **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, reinforcing national systems to prevent child recruitment and use, and conducting timely and impartial investigations and prosecutions; ensure provision of **comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response for child survivors**;
- Call on the 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

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)

Government to continue to uphold its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration, including by enacting the draft bill on protecting education from attack; encourage the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* and the Platform to swiftly and fully implement their respective action plans;

- Urge all parties to facilitate **safe, timely, and unimpeded access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all civilians in need, including children;
- 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.

SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

In April, the SG will report on the implementation of UNISFA's mandate, which is up for renewal in May, pursuant to SCR 2609 (2021). Since February, inter-communal [violence](#) has resumed in Abyei, reportedly leading to deaths and displacement of civilians. UNISFA has [called](#) for the immediate cessation of violence and urged all parties to respect human rights and ensure the safety of affected communities. Violence has further intensified since March 5, with at least [36](#) people killed and an estimated 50,000 displaced following clashes. Humanitarian operations have been suspended in conflict-affected areas. **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; and **urge all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- 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 a responsible exit strategy for UNISFA**, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations committed against children, building on lessons learned, and consulting with the relevant child protection experts.

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

OPEN DEBATE ON CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE (CRSV)

In April, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on conflict-related sexual violence, under the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda. **The Security Council and other UN Member States should:**

- Ensure **adequate resources and funding to support comprehensive, survivor-centered, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection for survivors** of sexual violence and their children; these efforts should take into account measures to avoid the stigmatization of survivors;
- Encourage the UN to continue to **strengthen monitoring, reporting, and response** to rape and sexual violence against children and linkages to other grave violations; where possible, gender-disaggregated information should continue to be made available to inform strategies to prevent and address sexual and gender-based violence;
- Strengthen support for the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces or groups, and **ensure that reintegration programming is gender-sensitive**;
- **Demand accountability for sexual violence in conflict**, including in cases involving child survivors, and encourage the development and timely implementation of time-bound action plans between parties to conflict and the UN to end and prevent all grave violations against children in conflict, including rape and sexual violence;
- Ensure **adequate financial, political, and operational support** for dedicated child protection, women protection, and gender experts in UN missions.

The United States is the lead country on CRSV. The United Kingdom is the lead country on WPS.

Recommendations to the Working Group

Since January 2021, the Working Group has received the SG's reports on children and armed conflict in Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Syria ([S/2021/398](#)), Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)), the Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)), Colombia ([S/2021/1022](#)), and Iraq ([S/2022/46](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February](#), [June](#), [September](#), [November](#), [December](#), [February 2022](#), and [March 2022](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for April: United Kingdom

Party to the 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 Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Human Rights Watch, "[Colombia/Venezuela: Border Area Abuses by Armed Groups](#)," March 28, 2022

Save the Children, "[No Place Is Safe in Yemen: The Impact of Seven Years of Conflict on Children in Yemen](#)," March 24, 2022

Human Rights Watch, "[Ethiopia Airstrike on Camps for Displaced Likely War Crime](#)," March 24, 2022

Save the Children, "[Speed Up Repatriations or Foreign Children Could Be Stuck in North East Syria Camps for Up to 30 Years](#)," March 23, 2022

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, "[Briefing Note: Children and Armed Conflict Concerns in Ukraine](#)," March 23, 2022

Watchlist & the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, "[Operational Guidance: Negotiating and Implementing Handover Protocols](#)," March 17, 2022

Defence for Children International, et al., "[Joint NGO Statement on Children and Armed Conflict](#)," March 16, 2022