

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
May 2022

IRAQ

The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2021/437](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for recruiting and using children, and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is listed for all five 'trigger' violations. In May, UNAMI's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2576 (2021). According to the SG's February report ([S/2022/103](#)), the UN documented the killing of nine boys and injury of 23 boys and two girls between October and December 2021. Children continue to be killed and injured by explosive remnants of war (ERW) and unexploded ordnance, including [four](#) children killed and two maimed in a single week in February 2022. In 2021, 52 children were killed and 73 were maimed by ERW and unexploded ordnance, an increase from the previous year. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on the Government to **strengthen the national child protection framework**, including by swiftly adopting and implementing the draft action plan to end and prevent child recruitment and use by the PMF;
- Urge the Government to intensify efforts to **remove administrative barriers hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians**, including children, to implement international legal instruments on improvised explosive devices (IEDs), landmines, and other ERW, and to promote mine clearance and mine risk education;
- Recall 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 development and signing of a handover protocol** to facilitate the release of children to child protection actors for reintegration and other support services;
- Encourage the Government to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration** and **take concrete measures to mitigate and avoid military use of schools**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021), ensuring accountability and redress for attacks on education.

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

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. The Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In May, UNSOM's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2592 (2021). According to the SG's February report ([S/2022/101](#)), between November 2021 and January 2022, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified the recruitment and use of 289 children, killing and maiming of 182 children, abduction of 220 children, and incidents of sexual violence against 68 children. **The Security Council should:**

- Renew UNSOM's child protection mandate, and **ensure sufficient resources are allocated and swiftly deployed** to allow UNSOM to fully deliver on this mandate;
- Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**, to **treat children formerly or allegedly associated with armed forces or groups primarily as victims**, in line with the Paris Principles, and to **consistently apply the 2014 Standard Operating Procedures** for the reception and handover of children separated from armed groups to civilian child protection actors;
- Encourage the Federal Government to strengthen its legal framework for the protection of children and to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**;
- Urge the Federal Government to **fully implement its 2012 action plans on recruitment and use and killing and maiming, as well as its 2019 roadmap**, and to swiftly engage with the UN to strengthen its commitments to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

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

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

Five non-state armed groups (NSAGs) are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use. In May, the SG will report on UNITAMS' mandate, which is up for renewal in June, pursuant to SCR 2579 (2021). According to the SG's March report ([S/2022/172](#)), the CTFMR verified the killing and maiming of eight children, incidents of sexual violence against seven girls, one attack on a hospital, and four incidents of denial of humanitarian access. The CTFMR also noted continued access challenges and a deteriorating operational environment. In this context of civil unrest after the October military coup, nine children were killed and 13 were injured during demonstrations, 12 children were subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, boys and girls as young as 12 have been detained by security forces, and children have been impacted by frequent attacks on medical facilities. At least 21 children were [reportedly](#) killed, including an 11-month-old infant, in recent violence in West Darfur. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew UNITAMS' child protection mandate and ensure that adequate resources are allocated and swiftly deployed** to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on this mandate, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations, pursuant to SCR 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC;
- **Call for accelerated efforts to end impunity for all perpetrators** of grave violations, including violations committed by Sudanese Armed Forces and Rapid Support Forces, support **comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response for child survivors of sexual violence**, and encourage Sudanese authorities to engage with the UN to **develop and implement a national prevention plan** on grave violations against children;
- Urge all listed parties to **engage with the UN to develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**, and to **expedite implementation of existing action plans** and roadmaps, including the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians;
- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be fully incorporated and prioritized in ongoing and future peacebuilding efforts**, 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 Sudan.

OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT

In May, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on the protection of civilians (PoC) in armed conflict. **The Security Council and other UN Member States should:**

- Express political support and allocate adequate resources to UN missions to deliver on protection mandates, including dedicated child protection capacity; ensure that protection (PoC, conflict-related sexual violence, and child protection) knowledge, data, and capacity are preserved during mission transitions or drawdown;
- Call on the SG to ensure a credible, evidence-based list of perpetrators in the annexes of his annual report on CAAC, including listing parties responsible for attacks on schools and hospitals and other trigger violations, and consistently applying standards to all perpetrators across all conflicts;
- Pursue accountability for violations of international humanitarian law and consistently support international, independent investigative mechanisms in situations of armed conflict with significant civilian casualties, ensuring adequate child rights expertise is included in such mechanisms, and that reports from these mechanisms are made public;
- Call on parties to conflict, including Member States, to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and to protect civilians, including objects indispensable to their survival.

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

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 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [November 2021](#), [December 2021](#), [February 2022](#), and [March 2022](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for May: United States

Party to the Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocol III, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and ILO Convention 182. Has not ratified Additional Protocols I or II of the Geneva Conventions nor the Rome Statute of the ICC. The United States is the only UN Member State not to have ratified the CRC. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, ["Remember the Armed Men Who Wanted to Kill Mum": The Toll of Witnessing Violence on Al-Hol's Children](#), April 25, 2022

Human Rights Watch, [A Bleak Future with Education Under Attack in Afghanistan](#), April 20, 2022

Human Rights Watch, [Houthi Commit to End Violations Against Children in Yemen](#), April 19, 2022

Save the Children, [Ukraine: Almost 400 Children Killed or Injured with Two-Thirds Fleeing Their Homes in First Seven Weeks of War](#), April 14, 2022

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, ["A Credible List": Recommendations for the Secretary-General's 2022 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict](#), April 12, 2022

ChildFund Alliance, et al., [Joining Forces Partnership Calls for Urgent Actions to Be Taken to Protect Children and Their Families in Ukraine](#), April 11, 2022

World Vision, [The Women and Children of Syria's Widow Camps: Hardest to Reach, Most at Risk](#), April 11, 2022

Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security, [Allons-Y: Journal of Children, Peace, and Security](#), Vol. 6, March 2022