

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
August 2022

The Secretary-General's (SG) annual report ([S/2022/493](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) was released in July. Watchlist's August CAAC update spotlights the "Annex II" situations in the SG's annual report—those that are not on the regular agenda of the Security Council—where perpetrators have been listed for committing grave violations.

BURKINA FASO

In his 2022 annual report on CAAC, the SG newly listed *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin* (JNIM) in the annexes for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction of children in Burkina Faso. In 2021, the UN verified the killing and maiming of 227 children (91 boys, 92 girls, 44 of unknown sex), 68 cases of recruitment and use (62 boys, 6 girls), nine cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence (all girls), 85 attacks on schools and hospitals, 250 abductions (88 boys, 159 girls, 3 of unknown sex), and 17 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. Of those children recruited and used, most were used as combatants, and some were as young as six years old. A total of 18 boys were detained in a high security prison for their alleged association with armed groups, including three who have been in detention since 2018. Among those children who were abducted, 238 were subsequently released. The Government of Burkina Faso has previously developed a handover protocol with the UN for the transfer of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors, which is awaiting final endorsement. Insecurity has further deteriorated since the January 2022 military coup, with armed groups reportedly carrying out [mass killings, rapes, and child recruitment](#), and government security forces and militias engaged in counterterrorism operations suspected of [violations](#) against civilians. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, allow and facilitate safe, timely, and unimpeded humanitarian access, and engage with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children; and urge accountability for all perpetrators;
- Remind all parties that **children affected by armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims**, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN; their reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards, and detention should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time; call for the **release of children detained for their alleged association with armed groups, and for the swift endorsement and full implementation of the handover protocol jointly developed with the UN**;
- Call for the **full implementation of Burkina Faso's commitments under the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles**;
- Demand that all parties **immediately cease attacks or threats against schools, hospitals, and related protected persons**, in line with SCR 2601 (2021).

LAKE CHAD BASIN

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad* (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), are newly listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for abducting children in the Lake Chad Basin region. Although Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups have been listed for committing grave violations against children in Nigeria since [2014](#), they have now been additionally listed for committing violations in the Lake Chad Basin. In 2021, the UN verified 928 grave violations across the Far North Region of Cameroon (94), Lac Province in Chad (166), the Diffa Region in Niger (224), and northeast Nigeria (444). Violations committed in Cameroon and Nigeria (see below) are further covered in their respective country sections of the SG's report. As many as 68 children were victims of multiple violations. Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups were the primary perpetrators of verified violations. The UN verified the recruitment and use of eight boys in Chad (predominantly through abduction and used in support roles) and three boys in Niger. Most of the 26 verified child casualties resulted from improvised explosive devices (IED), explosive remnants of war (ERW), and gunshots. The Chadian National Army was found responsible for rape and other forms of sexual violence against two girls. Unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups carried out two attacks on hospitals and abducted 349 children (167 boys, 182 girls) in Chad (142) and Niger (207). Among those abducted, one child was killed, 35 were released, and six escaped, while the status of 307 children remains unknown. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, allow and facilitate safe, timely,

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Lake Chad Basin
Mali
Myanmar
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Yemen

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LAKE CHAD BASIN (cont'd)

and unimpeded humanitarian access, take action to end and prevent grave violations against children, and pursue accountability for all perpetrators;

- Call on armed groups, in particular Boko-Haram affiliated and splinter groups, to **unconditionally release all children from their custody, and end and prevent all child recruitment, use, and abductions**;
- Remind all parties that **children affected by armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims**, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN; their reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards, and detention should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time;
- Encourage the Governments of Chad and Niger to **continue to implement their respective handover protocols**, swiftly transferring children formerly associated with armed groups or forces to civilian child protection actors.

NIGERIA

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including *Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad* and ISWAP, are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for all five "trigger" violations against children in Nigeria. In 2021, the UN verified the recruitment and use of 63 children (9 boys, 54 girls), the killing and maiming of 88 children (53 boys, 34 girls, one of unknown sex), sexual violence perpetrated against 53 girls, 15 attacks on schools and hospitals, the abduction of 211 children (115 boys, 96 girls), and 14 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. In addition, 45 boys were detained by Nigerian Security Forces for their alleged association with armed groups. Of those, all but two were released following UN advocacy; however, the UN was denied access to detention facilities and thus could not verify the number of children in detention. Of the children abducted, 122 escaped or were released, while 89 remain unaccounted for. **The Security Council should:**

- Remind all parties that **children affected by armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims**, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN; their reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards;
- Urge the Government to **immediately release children held in military detention**, endorse and **urgently implement a protocol to swiftly hand over children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors**, and grant UN and independent monitors access to detention facilities;
- Encourage strengthened accountability for perpetrators of grave violations, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and support **comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services for child survivors of sexual violence** and strengthened preventive measures.

PHILIPPINES

Three non-state armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children. In 2021, the UN verified the recruitment and use of 27 children (14 boys, 13 girls), the killing and maiming of 21 children (15 boys, six girls), five attacks on schools and protected persons, and the abduction of one boy. Additionally, the UN verified four grave violations that had occurred in previous years. Government forces detained 24 children (13 boys, 11 girls), 15 of whom were released. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**; call on all parties engage with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children; and urge accountability for all perpetrators;
- Call on the Government to **ensure the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act and Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Handling Protocol are fully and consistently implemented**, including with regard to the treatment of children affected by the armed conflict primarily as victims and ensuring their swift handover to civilian child protection authorities;
- Call on the Government to **endorse and implement the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Safe Schools Declaration** and to **implement the Vancouver Principles**, which it has endorsed.

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](#)), Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)), and Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [December 2021](#), and [July 2022](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for August: China

Party to 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, and ILO Convention 182. Not a party to Additional Protocol III to the Geneva Conventions nor the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Yemen: One Child Killed and Eleven Injured in Shelling on a Playspace in Taiz](#), July 24, 2022

Save the Children, [Hundreds of Separated Children Searching for Parents as Conflict Grows in Eastern DRC](#), July 21, 2022

Amnesty International, [Myanmar: Military's Use of Banned Landmines in Kayah State Amounts to War Crimes](#), July 20, 2022

Human Rights Watch, [France Repatriates 51 Women and Children from Camps in Syria](#), July 13, 2022

Plan International, [Neglected Crisis Advocacy Brief](#), July 12, 2022

Human Rights Watch, [UN Chief Leaves Child Rights Violators Off 'List of Shame'](#), July 12, 2022

World Vision, [No Peace of Mind: The Looming Mental Health Crisis for the Children of Ukraine](#), July 5, 2022

Save the Children, ["No End in Sight" As Renewed Violence in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado Sparks Year-High Number of Children to Flee](#), July 1, 2022

Save the Children, [Ukraine: 21 Children Killed or Injured in Horrific Week of Violence](#), July 1, 2022