

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

AFGHANISTAN

Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP), and the Taliban forces and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani network, are each listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2022 annual report ([S/2022/493](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for committing grave violations against children. In September, the SG will report on UNAMA's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2626 (2022). Between the Taliban's takeover on August 15, 2021, and June 15, 2022, UNAMA recorded [441](#) child casualties (159 killed, 282 wounded), many of which resulted from attacks on civilian targets and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Children made up 71 percent of ERW casualties. The recruitment and use of children and sexual violence have been [exacerbated](#) by the ongoing [economic crisis](#) and the de facto authorities' definition of a child as any individual not showing physiological signs of puberty. The detention of children has increased in conflict-affected areas, and the UN's lack of access to detention centers remains an issue. A recent [report](#) by Save the Children found that 46 percent of girls in Afghanistan are not attending school, 26 percent of girls are showing signs of depression, and girls are almost twice as likely as boys to go to bed hungry. The Security Council has [expressed](#) "deep concern regarding the increasing erosion of respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and girls in Afghanistan by the Taliban." **The Security Council should:**

- Strongly condemn all attacks on civilians and civilian objects, and **demand that all parties in Afghanistan fully uphold their obligations under international law**, including international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL), as appropriate;
- Urge all parties to **immediately cease recruiting and using children**, to release those within their ranks, and to treat children allegedly associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) primarily as victims, **prioritizing their reintegration in line with international juvenile justice standards** and using detention only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time;
- Call on the de facto authorities to **abide by Afghanistan's national and international commitments to protect children**, including the definition of a child as any individual under 18 years, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Paris Principles and Commitments, and the Safe Schools Declaration;
- Reiterate the urgent necessity to cease the military use of schools and **reopen schools for all female students without further delay**, and to **swiftly reverse the policies and practices restricting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Afghan women and girls**, including by restoring specialized mechanisms to deal with cases of violence against them;
- **Ensure allocation of sufficient resources to the UN Country Team to strengthen capacities to deliver on its child protection mandate**, including for monitoring and engagement with parties to end and prevent grave violations, and to **address threats posed by landmines, ERW, and improvised explosive devices (IEDs)**.

[Norway](#) is the lead country on Afghanistan.

IRAQ

Da'esh (formerly referred to as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) is listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for all five "trigger" violations against children, and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed for child recruitment and use. In September, the SG will report on UNAMI's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2631 (2022), and UNITAD's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2597 (2021). As of December 2021, over [1,200](#) children remained in detention on national security-related charges, including for alleged association with Da'esh. In 2021, ERW were the leading cause of child casualties (127). Incidents of both the military use of schools and denial of humanitarian access increased in 2021, with most incidents attributed to Iraqi Government Forces. The UN described a [rise](#) in the use of explosive weapons in populated areas in Iraq following attacks on June 15, 2022, and July 20, 2022, both of which resulted in child casualties. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on the Government to **strengthen the national child protection framework**, including by prioritizing the adoption and swift implementation of the draft action plan to end and prevent child recruitment and use by the PMF; acknowledge the Government's commitment to repatriate children held in Northeast Syria following a rights-based approach and encourage them to continue to do so, in accordance with their duty under international law;

Monthly Update: September 2022

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
Philippines
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Yemen

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 WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

IRAQ (cont'd)

- 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 IEDs, landmines, and other ERW, and to promote mine clearance and mine risk education; urge all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas**;
- Recall that **all CAAFAG, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN, should be treated primarily as victims**, 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; urge donors to provide long-term, predictable funding for reintegration;
- Encourage the Government to **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration** and **take concrete measures to avoid military use of schools**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021), and ensure accountability and redress for attacks on education.

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

SOUTH SUDAN

The South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF), including Taban Deng-allied SSPDF, and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar (SPLA-IO) are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2022 annual report on CAAC for committing grave violations against children. This year, the SSPDF was delisted for attacks on schools and hospitals but remains listed for the other four "trigger" violations. In September, the SG will report on UNMISS, pursuant to SCR 2625 (2022). According to the SG's June report ([S/2022/468](#)), between February and June 2022, the UN verified the recruitment and use of 24 children (23 boys, one girl), the killing and maiming of 34 children (30 boys, four girls), 53 cases of rape (all girls), and abduction of six children (three boys, three girls). Between January 1 and July 30, 2022, [232](#) incidents related to humanitarian access constraints were reported in South Sudan, and five humanitarian workers have been killed since the beginning of 2022. The Special Representative of the SG for CAAC [visited](#) South Sudan in May, where she co-chaired a national conference on child protection and reflected with stakeholders on progress made toward implementing the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children.

The **Security Council** should:

- Urge the Government and parties that have endorsed the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to **fully and swiftly implement their commitments**, reiterate concern over continuing violations and the impact of inter-communal violence on children, and urge all parties to **immediately cease all grave violations against children** and to release and hand over to child protection actors all children from their ranks;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate unimpeded, rapid, and safe access to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children, and **respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure**;
- Call on the Government to **prioritize the reintegration of CAAFAG**, ensure that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes and security sector reform fully take into account the specific needs of children, and endorse the Paris Principles and the Vancouver Principles; urge donors to provide long-term, predictable funding for reintegration;
- Call on all parties to **take immediate and specific steps to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence** against children, ensure survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services, and strengthen preventive measures;
- Urge the Government to **end impunity for grave violations against children** through timely and impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution, and follow through on commitments to establish the Hybrid Court.

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

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 September: France

Party to 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

- ChildFund Alliance-Barnfonden: [Strategies to End Violence against Children in a Changing Climate - 4 Actions We Can Take Now to Keep Children Safe in Climate-Affected Communities](#), August 22, 2022
- Save the Children, [At Least 16 Percent of Children Killed in Six Months of War in Ukraine Aged Under Five](#), August 22, 2022
- Defence for Children International, [Israeli Forces Raid and Seal Shut DCIP and 5 Other Civil Society Organisations' Offices](#), August 18, 2022
- ChildFund Alliance, et al., [Immediate Action Needed to Protect Children from the Global Hunger Crisis](#), August 17, 2022
- Norwegian Refugee Council, [Gaza: NRC Calls for International Investigation Into Killing of Three Children Supported by Its Trauma Care Program](#), August 10, 2022
- Save the Children, [Statement on Violence in Gaza and Israel](#), August 7, 2022
- Save the Children, [Yemen: Last Week of Truce Sees the Highest Weekly Number of Child Casualties in Two Years](#), August 1, 2022
- War Child UK, [The Recruitment and Use of Children Into Armed Groups: A VoiceMore Report from the Democratic Republic of the Congo](#), February 2022