

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

### SOMALIA

Al-Shabaab is listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2022/493](#)) on children and armed conflict (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 Somali Police Forces (previously jointly listed as one entity) are each listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In October, UNSOM's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2632 (2022). According to the SG's May report ([S/2022/392](#)), between February and March 2022, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified the recruitment and use of 94 children, killing and maiming of 138 children, abduction of 98 children, incidents of sexual violence against 38 children, three attacks on schools and hospitals, and one incident of the denial of humanitarian access. **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.

## 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.

### NIGERIA

In August, the SG released his third report ([S/2022/596](#)) on CAAC in Nigeria, covering the period from January 2020 to December 2021. During this time, the CTFMR verified 694 grave violations against 532 children (279 boys, 250 girls, 3 unknown sex), representing a significant decrease from the previous report ([S/2020/652](#)) which covered a longer period. The main perpetrators were Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (610), including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP), followed by Nigerian Security Forces (32). The most prevalent verified violation was abduction (287), and the real number is believed to be "significantly higher" as access and security constraints hindered verification. Abducted children are frequently subjected to other grave violations including recruitment and use and rape and other forms of sexual violence. The UN verified 70 cases of recruitment and use, the killing and maiming of 212 children, 63 cases of sexual violence against girls, and 30 attacks on schools and hospitals. Increased hostility toward humanitarian workers was observed during the reporting period, and 32 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were verified. Children continued to be arrested and detained by Nigerian Security Forces on suspicion of involvement with Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, often with little or no evidence. The CTFMR verified the detention of 275 children by the Nigerian Security Forces, almost all of whom were released during the reporting period. The UN could not determine the actual number of children still detained as access to detention facilities has been denied. **The Working Group should:**

- Strongly condemn all continuing violations committed against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;
- Call on the Government and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to **sustain gains made through implementation of the CJTF's 2017 action plan and to swiftly implement its remaining provisions** on trainings on children's rights and establishing accountability mechanisms;

## Monthly Update: October 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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## NIGERIA (cont'd)

- 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**; call on the Government to endorse the Paris Principles and Commitments;
- Urge the **Government to immediately release children held in military detention, expedite endorsement of 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**;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children; and **respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure**;
- 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.

## THE PHILIPPINES

In July, the SG released his sixth report ([S/2022/569](#)) on CAAC in the Philippines, covering the period from January 2020 to December 2021. During this time, the CTFMR verified 115 grave violations against 104 children (62 boys, 42 girls), representing a decrease from the previous report ([S/2020/777](#)) which covered a longer period. Killing and maiming, recruitment and use, and attacks on schools and hospitals were the most prevalent verified violations, with killing and maiming accounting for more than half of all violations. 21 child casualties resulted from crossfire during clashes between Government Forces and armed groups or from explosive remnants of war (ERW) and improvised explosive devices (IED) and could not be attributed. The highest number of grave violations was attributed to the New People's Army (NPA), including 80 percent of all verified cases of recruitment and use. The Armed Forces were found responsible for using two children in support roles, two late-verified cases of sexual violence against girls, the killing and maiming of 16 children, one abduction, and three attacks on schools and hospitals. Indigenous communities were particularly impacted by attacks on schools. While the overall number of children (29) detained for alleged association with armed groups decreased since the previous report, lack of facilities and limited capacity of social workers to address detained children's needs are ongoing concerns. Access and security concerns, increasing risks and threats to human rights defenders and monitors, limited CTFMR capacity, and the COVID-19 pandemic all posed challenges during the reporting period. **The Working Group should:**

- Strongly condemn all ongoing grave violations, **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL, and call for all perpetrators of grave violations to be held accountable**;
- Urge all listed parties to **immediately end the recruitment and use of children**, release those within their ranks, and if they have not yet done so, engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations against children**;
- Encourage the Government to **continue efforts to implement the Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act (Republic Act No. 11188) and Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Handling Protocol**, 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;
- Urge all parties to **immediately end attacks against schools, hospitals, and protected personnel**, including schools in indigenous communities; further call on the Government to **take concrete measures to avoid military use of schools and cease all threats against education personnel**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021), to ensure accountability and redress for attacks on education, and to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children; and **respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure**;
- 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](#).

## Presidency of the Security Council for October: Gabon

*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, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention 182. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Vancouver Principles; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.*

## NGO RESOURCES

Action on Armed Violence, [Nine Children Among 11 Civilians Killed in Myanmar Military Attacks in Shan State and Sagaing](#), September 20, 2022

CRIN, [Research Guide on the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Child Returnees from North East Syria](#), September 20, 2022

Human Rights Watch, [Explosive Weapons Declaration to Curb Civilian Harm](#), September 20, 2022

Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, [The Impacts of Attacks on Education and Military Use in Myanmar](#), September 9, 2022

Human Rights Watch, ["It Was Really Hard to Protect Myself": Impact of the Armed Conflict in Syria on Children with Disabilities](#), September 8, 2022

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Iraq: Repeated Displacement Causes Trauma Among a Third of Children](#), September 6, 2022

Save the Children, [Grim Milestone Reached in Ukraine: 1,000 Children Confirmed Killed or Injured](#), September 6, 2022

Save the Children, [Surge in Conflict in Sudan's Blue Nile Region Kills Two Children and Injures 10](#), September 4, 2022