

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:  
December 2022

### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Thirteen parties are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2022/493](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for various grave violations against children, including the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In December, MONUSCO's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2612 (2021). According to the SG's September report ([S/2022/709](#)), the UN verified 285 grave violations against children between June 17 and July 31. The Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) were found responsible for the largest number of verified violations (43), while Congolese soldiers were allegedly responsible for eight cases of sexual violence, the abduction of three girls, the killing and maiming of two children, and three attacks on schools. The UN also verified the recruitment and use of 74 children, 68 of whom were verified after having escaped, been separated, or voluntarily released from armed groups. The Aluta M'Chingwa self-defense group, Mai-Mai Mazembe, and Nyatura were alleged to be the main perpetrators of child recruitment and use. Since October 20, fighting in Eastern DRC between the FARDC and the non-State armed group M23 has **intensified**, resulting in the displacement of **thousands** of children. In October, the SG published his latest report on CAAC in DRC; See recommendations to the Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC) below. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MONUSCO's child protection mandate**, ensure that the mission is adequately resourced to fully and effectively implement this mandate, including by preserving the current dedicated child protection capacity, and ensuring the senior Child Protection Adviser continues to have direct access to senior mission leadership and political and operational space to engage with all parties to conflict, including non-State armed groups; **maintain distinct budget lines for child protection**;
- Stress the need to **maintain adequate child protection capacity during MONUSCO's transition**, including capacity for monitoring and reporting on grave violations per SCR 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC and for continuing to strengthen the capacities of Government Forces and other State actors to protect the rights of conflict-affected children; and **ensure drawdown timelines allow appropriate time for planning, resource allocation, and capacity building**;
- Urge all parties to **immediately cease recruiting and using children**, release those within their ranks, uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL), and if they have not yet done so, engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**;
- Welcome the ongoing peace talks and **call for prioritization of the protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children**, particularly in demobilization, disarmament, and reintegration processes.

France is the lead country on DRC.

### MALI

Three parties are listed in the SG's 2022 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children. Of these, *Ansar Eddine*, as part of *Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimina* and *Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad*, part of the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* are also listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In December, the SG is expected to report on MINUSMA's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2640 (2022). According to the SG's October report ([S/2022/731](#)), the UN verified 369 grave violations against children between June and October, including recruitment and use (192), killing and maiming (73), sexual violence (13), abductions (50), attacks against schools and hospitals (16) and denial of humanitarian access (25). **The Security Council should:**

- Urge the Malian authorities to **strengthen the legal child protection framework 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; Urge the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* and the Platform to **swiftly and fully implement their respective action plans**;
- Call on the Malian authorities 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 groups by the UN, treating children primarily as victims and prioritizing their reintegration, as guided by the Paris Principles;
- Call on the Malian authorities to **allow and facilitate the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian**

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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## MALI (cont'd)

**assistance** to affected populations, especially children;

- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks on schools and education personnel** and urge the Malian authorities to continue to uphold commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration, including by enacting the draft bill on protecting education from attack;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its third [conclusions](#) on Mali.

**France** is the lead country on Mali.

## Recommendations to the Working Group

The Working Group continues to negotiate conclusions in response to the following reports of the SG on children and armed conflict: Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Syria ([S/2021/398](#)), Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), the Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), Nigeria ([S/2022/596](#)), and Sudan ([S/2022/627](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [December 2021](#), [July 2022](#), [October 2022](#), and [November 2022](#), respectively.

## DRC

In October, the SG released his eighth report ([S/2022/745](#)) on the situation of CAAC in DRC, covering the period from April 2020 to March 2022. During that time, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 7,616 grave violations. Non-State armed groups were found responsible for 93 percent of verified violations, while Government forces were found responsible for seven percent (496). Recruitment & use (3,901), abduction (1,548), and sexual violence (944) were the three most verified violations. Killing and maiming (929) and attacks on schools and hospitals (281) were also verified in high numbers and sharply increased as compared to the previous report (238 percent and 208 percent, respectively). Abduction and sexual violence also increased. Rape and other forms of sexual violence continued to be the violation most attributed to Government Forces, of which, FARDC were the main perpetrators. The CTFMR also verified the detention of 233 children for alleged association with armed groups, as well as seven incidents of the military use of schools. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all continuing violations and abuses committed against children** in the DRC, express grave concern at the increase in verified cases of killing and maiming, abduction, rape and other forms sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL;**
- **Welcome the Government's endorsement of the Vancouver Principles and encourage their swift and full implementation;** call on the Government to approve the new draft FARDC code of ethics and conduct with specific provisions for preventing grave violations against children;
- Welcoming the Government's continued efforts to **consolidate the gains of its 2012 action plan**, call for the **swift and full operationalization of the national strategy for implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery, and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS)**, integrating gender-specific considerations to address the needs of girls associated with armed groups and armed forces; and **call on international partners to support and ensure predictable funding for the reintegration of children separated from armed groups;**
- Urge all armed groups to **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and end and prevent all child recruitment and use;** reiterate that children associated with armed forces and groups should be treated primarily as victims and call on the Government to ensure children formerly associated with armed groups are consistently handed over to civilian child protection actors in compliance with its 2013 directives and the Paris Principles, which it has endorsed;
- Call on all parties to take immediate and specific steps to **end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including by ensuring perpetrators of grave violations are held accountable and that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection, and call on the Government to **accelerate efforts to implement aspects of its 2012 action plan relating to sexual violence** and the Joint Communiqué signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks and threats of attack on educational and health facilities and personnel**, as well as to refrain from the military use of schools, and encourage the Government to follow up on implementation of its 2017 Safe Schools Declaration roadmap.

## Presidency of the Security Council for December: India

*Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, 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 Protocols III to the Geneva Conventions, nor the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Vancouver Principles, nor the Safe Schools Declaration.*

## NGO RESOURCES

CARE, et al., [NGOs Call for an Urgent Scale Up in Support, Alongside Immediate Action to Secure Humanitarian Access to Northwest Syria](#), November 29, 2022

Save the Children, [Number of Children Living in Deadliest War Zones Jumps Nearly 10 Percent in One Year](#), November 29, 2022

Save the Children, [2022 Becomes the Deadliest Year for Palestinian Children in the West Bank in Over 15 Years](#), November 23, 2022

Human Rights Watch, ["My Son Is Just Another Kid" Experiences of Children Repatriated from Camps for ISIS Suspects and Their Families in Northeast Syria](#), November 21, 2022

Save the Children, [Children in Yemen Demand New Truce as One Child Is Killed or Injured Every Day in 2022](#), November 19, 2022

Action on Armed Violence, [States Adopt First Ever International Agreement to Protect Civilians from Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas](#), November 18, 2022

Save the Children, ["This Is My Life and I Don't Want to Waste a Year of It": The Experiences and Wellbeing of Children Fleeing Ukraine](#), November 14, 2022