

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:  
February 2023

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Local militias known as anti-balaka, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC)*, *Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC)*, and *Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC)* as part of the former Séléka coalition, are all listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2022 annual report ([S/2022/493](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for various grave violations against children. In February, the SG will report on the situation in CAR and MINUSCA, pursuant to SCR 2659 (2022). According to the SG's October report ([S/2022/762](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 366 grave violations against children between June and October 2022. Violations included recruitment and use (286), killing and maiming (26), rape and other forms of sexual violence (30), abduction (11), attacks against schools (3), and the denial of humanitarian access (10). In June, the Government held a validation workshop with MINUSCA support to address the handover protocol for children apprehended on the frontlines for alleged association with armed forces and groups for their transfer to representatives of the Ministry for the Promotion of Gender, Family and Protection of Children and child protection partners. In December, the Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC) adopted its latest [conclusions](#) on CAR. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on all parties to **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and to **end and prevent grave violations against children**, including by engaging with the UN to sign and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations against children; urge the MPC, FPRC, and UPC to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans** and release all children still in their ranks;
- Call on the Government to **fully implement all aspects of the Child Protection Code** and to **ensure perpetrators of grave violations are held accountable** and that child survivors of sexual violence have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services, and to strengthen preventive measures; encourage the Government to appoint child protection focal points in the armed forces and establish effective measures in cooperation with the UN to end and prevent grave violations by National Defense Forces and other security personnel;
- Urge the **adoption and implementation of a handover protocol to facilitate the release of children to civilian child protection actors**, prioritizing their reintegration in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments, which the Government has endorsed;
- Call for the **swift and full implementation of the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its fifth conclusions on CAR.

France is the lead country on CAR.

### SUDAN

Five non-State armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2022 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children in the Sudan. In February, the SG will report on UNITAMS, pursuant to SCR 2636 (2022). According to the SG's December report ([S/2022/898](#)), the CTFMR verified 51 grave violations against 45 children between August and November 2022. Grave violations included the killing and maiming of 32 children (seven boys, 10 girls, 15 of unknown sex), incidents of rape and sexual violence against 10 girls, the abduction of three children (two boys, one girl), one attack on a school, and two incidents of the denial of humanitarian access. Explosive remnants of war (ERW) accounted for eight of the verified incidents of killing and maiming. The vast majority of grave violations were unattributed to a specific perpetrator. In December, the SCWG-CAAC adopted its latest [conclusions](#) on the Sudan. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on all parties to **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and 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 accelerated efforts to **end impunity for perpetrators of grave violations**, including violations committed by Government Security Forces; support comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services for child survivors of sexual violence and strengthened preventive measures; and encourage Sudanese authorities to engage with the UN to **develop and implement a national prevention plan on grave violations against children**;

### 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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## SUDAN (cont'd)

- 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**;
- **Ensure sufficient resources are allocated and swiftly deployed to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, pursuant to SCR 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC;
- Call for the **swift and full implementation of the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its seventh conclusions on the Sudan.

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

## 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](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), and Nigeria ([S/2022/596](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [July 2022](#), and [October 2022](#), respectively.

## MALI

In November, the SG published his fourth report on the situation of CAAC in Mali ([S/2022/856](#)), covering the period from April 2020 to March 2022. During this period, the CTFMR verified 2,095 grave violations against 1,473 children (1,134 boys, 314 girls, 25 of unknown sex), representing a significant increase from the previous report ([S/2020/1105](#)) which covered a longer period. Recruitment and use and abduction both sharply increased during the reporting period. Attacks on schools and hospitals also increased, and 1,731 schools remained closed as of March 2022 due to insecurity, attacks, and threats of attacks against schools and related personnel. Verified incidents of killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the denial of humanitarian access remained high. For more than half of grave violations (55 percent), a specific perpetrator was not identified. The proportion of grave violations attributed to Government Security Forces increased compared to the previous report. The CTFMR noted monitoring and reporting challenges due to insecurity and restricted access to some conflict-affected areas, as well as movement restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Lack of progress on combatting impunity was – once again – highlighted in this report, in particular regarding rape and other forms of sexual violence. **The Working Group should:**

- Strongly **condemn all grave violations and abuses that continue to be committed against children** in Mali, and demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**; Welcome the signature of an action plan to end and prevent recruitment and use of children by two factions of the Platform, and urge the Platform factions and the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad* to **swiftly and fully implement their respective action plans**;
- Urge the Malian authorities to **strengthen the legal child protection framework**, including by finalizing the Child Protection Code revision, reinforcing national systems to prevent child recruitment and use, and validating the draft law annulling the 30-day legal deadline for birth registration;
- Call upon all signatory parties of the 2015 Peace Agreement to **ensure that children's rights and protection needs are prioritized in all negotiations on disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration programs**, including the unconditional release of children in their ranks;
- **Express concern at the lack of progress on combatting impunity**, and urge the Malian authorities to strengthen accountability for grave violations against children, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, by conducting timely and impartial investigations and, where appropriate, prosecutions, and ensuring child survivors of sexual violence have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services;
- 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;
- 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 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.

## Presidency of the Security Council for February: Malta

*Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I-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, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles.*

## NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Eastern DRC: Nearly 65,000 Children Forced to Flee Homes Due to Violent Clashes, as Pope Visits the Country](#), February 1, 2023

World Vision, [Impact of War on Ukraine's Children: A Child Protection Report](#), January 31, 2023

World Vision, [Born Learning: Expanding Learning Opportunities for the Youngest Children in Crisis Settings](#), January 19, 2023

Save the Children, [Syria: Longer-Term Commitment Needed to Keep Lifesaving Aid Border Crossing Open](#), January 9, 2023

Human Rights Watch, [10 Good News Stories for Kids in 2022](#), December 20, 2022