

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
April 2023

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 are each listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In April, the Security Council is expected to discuss the implementation of ATMIS mandate, pursuant to SCR 2628 (2022).

According to the SG's February report on Somalia ([S/2023/109](#)), the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 1,127 grave violations against children between August 23, 2022, and January 1, 2023. The CTFMR also identified the ongoing drought and military offensives against Al-Shabaab as key factors contributing to violations. The outbreak of violence in Laascaanood town in February has reportedly led to the displacement of over 185,000, [89](#) percent of whom are women and children. At the time of writing, the Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC) continues to negotiate its conclusions in response to the SG's sixth report on the situation of CAAC in Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)). **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **fully uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, immediately cease all grave violations against children, and release all children within their ranks;
- Call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**, to enact the Child Rights Bill, to adopt the original 2018 Sexual Offences Bill, to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, to **treat children allegedly associated with armed forces or groups primarily as victims**, in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments, and adopt age verification guidelines;
- 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; to **swiftly engage with the UN to strengthen its commitments to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence** against children; 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 **implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**, developing comprehensive risk assessments and risk reduction strategies to prevent and respond to attacks, including child recruitment and sexual violence at, or on the way to or from, school;
- Emphasize the need to **allocate and swiftly deploy sufficient resources to allow UNSOM to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**.

The **United Kingdom** is the lead country on Somalia. **Japan** chairs the 751 Somalia Sanctions Committee.

YEMEN

Four parties to conflict are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2022 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children. Of these, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) are also listed for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals. The Security Council receives a monthly briefing on Yemen. April 2 will mark one-year since the now-lapsed truce agreement. On March 22, a group of [141](#) NGOs penned an open letter calling for a new truce deal and steps toward a "real, long-lasting, and inclusive Yemeni peace process," as well as expressing shock that less than one-third of required humanitarian funds were committed during a recent pledging [conference](#). Recent [analysis](#) by Save the Children found that one child has been killed or injured on average every three days for the past five years by landmines and other explosive devices and that child casualties from landmines increased in 2022. **The Security Council should:**

- Call on parties to **urgently work towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process that includes meaningful child participation and protection measures**, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- Call on all parties to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans and other concrete commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children**, including the Government of Yemen's 2014 action plan to end and prevent recruitment and use and the 2018 roadmap, the

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

YEMEN (cont'd)

- Coalition's 2019 memorandum of understanding and related program of activities, and the Houthi's 2022 [action plan](#); and urge all parties to conflict who have not yet done so to sign and implement action plans with the UN to end and prevent grave violations;
- Urge all parties to **facilitate immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid** to children and other civilians in need; and call for increased efforts to **identify and remove landmines and unexploded remnants of war** and to hold **perpetrators of all violations and abuses against children accountable**, including through timely, independent, and systematic investigations, and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction;
 - Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC, as elaborated in its third conclusions** on Yemen; support efforts to ensure sustainable financial resources for child protection activities and programs in Yemen, including for the implementation of warring parties' commitments and of the SCWG-CAAC conclusions.

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

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. See also, Watchlist's Monthly CAAC update from [February 2023](#) for targeted recommendations related to the SG's latest report on CAAC in Mali ([S/2022/856](#)).

SOUTH SUDAN

In February, the SG published his fourth report ([S/2023/99](#)) on the situation of children and armed conflict in South Sudan, covering the period from July 1, 2020, to June 30, 2022. During the reporting period, the CTFMR verified 457 grave violations against 409 children (287 boys, 114 girls, eight of unknown sex). The most prevalent grave violation verified was the recruitment and use of children (182), followed by killing and maiming (117), and rape and other forms of sexual violence (74). Attacks on schools and hospitals reduced by 50 percent during the reporting period. Government Forces, including the SSPDF, were found responsible for 35 percent of grave violations, while armed groups were found responsible for 45 percent. Accountability, particularly for rape and other forms of sexual violence, continued to be a challenge, however, the UN noted the launch of the Government's mobile general and district court martials, as a positive development. The UN also noted improved monitoring and reporting conditions enabled by the formation of the Necessary Unified Forces during the reporting period. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all continuing grave violations** against children in South Sudan, and demand that all parties **fully uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Urge the Government and parties that have endorsed the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to **fully and swiftly implement their commitments**, and urge all parties to **immediately cease all grave violations against children, to facilitate humanitarian assistance and protect humanitarian personnel**, and to release and hand over to child protection actors all children from their ranks;
- Call on the Government to **prioritize the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups**, ensure that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes and security sector reform fully take into account the specific needs of children, including gender-specific experiences and needs of girls, 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;
- 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 uphold its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration, which it has endorsed;
- Urge the Government to **end impunity for grave violations against children** through timely and impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution before competent courts, and follow through on commitments to establish the Hybrid Court.

Presidency of the Security Council for April: Russia

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, and ILO Convention 182. Not a party to 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

Human Rights Watch, [One Year On, the Taliban Still Attacking Girls' Right to Education](#), March 24, 2023

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Burkina Faso Home to Almost Half of Closed Schools in Central and West Africa](#), March 21, 2023

Save the Children, [20 Years Since the US-Led Invasion, the Forgotten Children and Women of Iraq Are Struggling to Rebuild Their Lives](#), March 20, 2023

Save the Children, [Save the Children Calls for Full Investigation into Violations of Children's Rights in Ukraine](#), March 17, 2023

Human Rights Watch, [Ukraine: Perils of War for Children in Institutions](#), March 13, 2023

World Vision, [Dire Consequences: 12 Years of Suffering in Syria – An Overview of the Most Pressing Needs Shaping the Humanitarian Response in Syria Today](#), March 12, 2023