

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
May 2023

IRAQ

Da'esh 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 against children, and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed for child recruitment and use. In May, UNAMI's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2631 (2022). In March, the Government of Iraq [signed](#) an action plan with the UN to end and prevent recruitment and use of children by the PMF. According to the SG's January report on UNAMI ([S/2023/58](#)), between September and December 2022, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 42 grave violations, including incidents of killing and maiming, primarily by explosive remnants of war (ERW), the recruitment and use of one girl and two boys by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), one sexual violence-related violation by Da'esh, and one attack on a school by Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps. **The Security Council should:**

- Welcome the action plan to prevent recruitment and use of children by the PMF, and **urge swift and full implementation of this plan**, including measures to strengthen age verification and to adopt legislation and administrative measures to prevent the recruitment and use of children, as well as the prompt investigation of any allegation of recruitment and use of children;
- Recall that **all children allegedly associated with armed forces and armed groups should be treated primarily as victims**, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN and those who may have committed crimes, their reintegration should be prioritized, and detention should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time; encourage the Government to continue its **efforts to repatriate children held in Northeast Syria**, following a rights-based approach, in accordance with their duty under international law;
- 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;
- Urge the Government to intensify efforts to **remove administrative barriers hindering the delivery of humanitarian aid to civilians**, including children, and to issue identification documents to allow all children to access public assistance and basic services, including education;
- Call on the Government to implement international legal instruments on IEDs, landmines, and other ERW, and to promote mine clearance and explosive ordnance risk education; urge all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons with wide-area effects in populated areas**.

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

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 May, the SG will report on UNITAMS, pursuant to SCR 2636 (2022), which expires in June. According to the SG's February report on UNITAMS ([S/2023/154](#)), between November 2022 and February 2023, the CTFMR verified the killing and maiming of 13 children by unidentified perpetrators in Darfur. On April 15, clashes erupted between the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in Khartoum. At the time of writing, these clashes were ongoing and had spread outside of the capital. The [SG](#), the [Security Council](#), and the [Office of the Special Representative of the SG for CAAC](#) have called for an immediate cessation of hostilities, a return to dialogue, and stressed the need to restore and maintain humanitarian access. The violence has led to temporary suspensions of humanitarian operations, with [reports](#) of both sides targeting humanitarian workers, widespread [looting](#) of aid and medical supplies, and power outages leading to the loss of [vaccines](#) critical for children. The Sudan INGO Forum has [called](#) for respect for international humanitarian law (IHL), including the protection of civilians, protection of aid workers and assets, unimpeded humanitarian access, and additional and flexible humanitarian funding. The UN has reported [nine](#) children killed and more than 50 injured as of April 20, noting that the security situation makes it very difficult to collect and verify information. **The Security Council should:**

- **Unequivocally condemn all attacks on humanitarian actors, civilians, especially children, and civilian infrastructure; demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and human rights law (IHRL)**, taking all necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, including schools and

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)

hospitals, in accordance with the principles of precaution, distinction, and proportionality; call on all parties to **avoid the use of EWIPA**;

- **Demand an immediate ceasefire** with clearly articulated timeframes, coordinate with relevant regional and subregional organizations and humanitarian actors to establish such a ceasefire, as well as to prevent further violations and abuses against civilians, including children; urge all parties to respect the April 20 [AU Communiqué](#);
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children; and **respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure**;
- **Renew UNITAMS' child protection mandate and ensure that adequate resources are allocated to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on this mandate**, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations, pursuant to SCR 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC.

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

SUDAN/SOUTH SUDAN (ABYEI)

In May, the SG will report on UNISFA's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2660 (2022). From April 3-6, representatives from the Ngok Dinka and Twic Dinka communities, including women and youth, participated in an inter-communal peace conference in which the communities [agreed](#) to a cessation of hostilities, unhindered movement along roads, including for humanitarian assistance, and a return of displaced communities. UNICEF had previously noted the [impact](#) of escalating inter-communal violence in Abyei on the humanitarian needs of children. **The Security Council should:**

- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be fully incorporated and prioritized in ongoing and future efforts to build and sustain peace at the community level**, drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#); and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes where possible and compatible with the child's best interests;
- **Ensure that child protection is appropriately considered and prioritized in ongoing efforts to develop a responsible exit strategy for UNISFA**, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations committed against children, building on lessons learned, and consulting with the relevant child protection experts.

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

OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN CONFLICT (PoC)

On May 23, 2023, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on PoC. **The Security Council and other UN Member States should:**

- Express political support and allocate adequate resources to UN missions to deliver on protection mandates, including dedicated child protection capacity; ensure that protection (PoC, conflict-related sexual violence, and child protection) knowledge, data, and capacity are preserved during mission transitions or drawdown;
- Call on the SG to ensure a credible, evidence-based list of perpetrators in the annexes of his annual report on CAAC, including listing parties responsible for attacks on schools and hospitals and other trigger violations, and consistently applying standards to all perpetrators across all conflicts;
- Pursue accountability for violations of IHL and consistently support international, independent investigative mechanisms in situations of armed conflict with significant civilian casualties, ensuring adequate child rights expertise is included in such mechanisms, and that reports from these mechanisms are made public;
- Call on parties to conflict, including Member States, to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and to protect civilians, including objects indispensable to their survival.

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 updates from [February 2023](#) and [April 2023](#) for targeted recommendations related to the SG's latest reports on CAAC in Mali ([S/2022/856](#)) and South Sudan ([S/2023/99](#)).

Presidency of the Security Council for May: Switzerland

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

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, "[A Credible List](#)": [Recommendations for the Secretary-General's 2023 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict](#), April 19, 2023

Save the Children, [More than 2.3 Million Children Out of School in Northern Ethiopia Despite Peace Agreement](#), April 13, 2023

Human Rights Watch, [Investigation Launches into Forcible Transfer of Children of Children in Ukraine](#), April 6, 2023

Save the Children, [Ukraine: One in Eight Landmine Casualties Is a Child as Detonation Accidents Spike](#), April 4, 2023