

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
June 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 June, the SG is expected to report on the situation in CAR and MINUSCA, pursuant to SCR 2659 (2022). According to the SG's February report on MINUSCA ([S/2023/108](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 97 grave violations against children between October 2022 and January 2023. The LRA was found responsible for 53 percent of these violations, including the abduction, recruitment, and use of 20 children. Children accounted for half of all civilian casualties caused by explosive remnants of war (ERW) in 2022, compared to just six percent in 2021. **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 on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC)**, as elaborated in its fifth [conclusions](#) on CAR..

France is the lead country on CAR.

COLOMBIA

Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups and *Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN)* are listed in the annexes of the SG'S 2022 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children in Colombia. In June, the SG is expected to report on the Verification Mission, pursuant to SCR 2545 (2020) and 2574 (2021). Between January and September 2022, the CTFMR verified [192](#) grave violations against children in Colombia. Recent [research](#) by International Crisis Group details continuing trends of recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as sexual violence and exploitation of women and girls. Children also continue to be negatively [impacted](#) by ERW, landmines, and launched explosive devices. In November 2022, the Colombian Government became the 116th Member State to [endorse](#) the Safe Schools Declaration. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all armed groups, in particular the ELN and FARC-EP dissidents, **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and prevent and end all child recruitment, use, and abductions, as well as other grave violations;**
- Encourage the Government to continue **strengthening efforts to prevent the recruitment and use of both Colombian and Venezuelan children**, as well as other grave violations, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, including girls and indigenous and Afro-Colombian children, and noting vulnerability to recruitment at informal border crossings;
- Call on all parties to **cease attacks and threats of attack on schools and education personnel**, as well as to refrain from the military use of schools and educational facilities; **welcome the Government's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration** and encourage its swift implementation;

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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COLOMBIA (cont'd)

- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC, as elaborated in its fifth [conclusions](#)** on Colombia, including the continuation and further strengthening of coordination on mine-clearance operations and explosive ordnance risk education.

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

MALI

Three parties are listed in the SG's 2022 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children in Mali. 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 June, MINUSMA's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2640 (2022). According to the SG's March report on MINUSMA ([S/2023/236](#)), the UN verified 264 grave violations against children between January and March 2023, an increase from the previous reporting period. Cases of both recruitment and use and attacks on schools and hospitals increased notably from the previous reporting period. In November, the SG published his fourth report on the situation of CAAC in Mali ([S/2022/856](#)), and the SCWG-CAAC continues to negotiate its conclusions. See Watchlist's [February 2023](#) update for targeted recommendations to the SCWG-CAAC. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MINUSMA's child protection mandate**, taking child protection fully into account as a cross-cutting issue, and in subsequent budget negotiations, ensure allocation of sufficient resources to enable the mission to fully deliver on this mandate;
- 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; 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; as well as to **strengthen accountability for grave violations** against children;
- 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.

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](#)), 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

Presidency of the Security Council for June: United Arab Emirates

Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I-II, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), and ILO Convention 182. Not a party to the Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict nor the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, et al., [Open Letter Calling for a Complete and Accurate List of Perpetrators](#), May 31, 2023

International Rescue Committee (IRC), et al., [NGOs Call for Member States to Address Critical Issues Ahead of UN Security Council's Open Debate on the Protection of Civilians](#), May 18, 2023

Save the Children, [Sudan: Armed Groups Occupying Health Facilities, Looting, Cutting off Lifeline for Country's Children as Numbers in Need Surge](#), May 17, 2023

CARE, IRC, and Save the Children, [NGOs Call for Halt to Returning Children in Institutional Care Centers from Poland to Ukraine](#), May 15, 2023

Save the Children, [Schools Closed and Children Too Terrified to Sleep as New Round of Violence Hits Gaza](#), May 11, 2023

Save the Children, [Armed Groups in North Kivu Attack More Than 150 Schools Since the Start of the Year, Affecting Over 62,000 Children](#), May 9, 2023

Plan International, [Families Separated While Fleeing Escalating Hostilities in Sudan](#), May 4, 2023

Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), [The Impact of Explosive Violence on Children: A Global Crisis](#), May 2, 2023