

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
August 2023

IRAQ

Da'esh is listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2023/363](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for all five "trigger" violations against children. The Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) have been delisted for recruitment and use, "conditional upon the finalization of all pending action plan activities and the continued absence of recruitment and use of children" In September, the SG is expected to report on UNAMI, pursuant to SCR 2682 (2023) and, in the same month, UNITAD's mandate will be up for renewal, per SCR 2651 (2022). In 2022, the UN verified 202 grave violations against children in Iraq, and as of December 2022, 936 children remained in detention on national security-related charges, including actual or alleged association with armed groups. The majority of child casualties verified in 2022 (67 percent) were caused by explosive remnants of war (ERW). **The Security Council should:**

- Call for **swift and full implementation of the action plan** to prevent recruitment and use of children by the PMF;
- Recall that **all children allegedly associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) 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;
- **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;
- Call on the Government to implement international legal instruments on improvised explosive devices, 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 (EWIPA)**;
- 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 fourth [conclusions](#) on Iraq.

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

LIBYA

Libya is a situation of concern in the SG's latest annual report on CAAC. In August, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of UNSMIL's mandate, pursuant to SCR 2656 (2022). In 2022, the UN verified 102 grave violations against children in Libya. The UN also received reports of 64 children detained with their mothers, for their mothers' alleged association with Da'esh. According to the UN, at least [289](#) children are estimated to have died or disappeared so far in 2023 attempting to cross the Central Mediterranean Sea from North Africa to Europe, most departing from Libya or Tunisia. **The Security Council should:**

- Condemn all continuing grave violations against children in Libya, urge all parties to uphold their obligations under **international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and express concern over the continued threat that ERW pose to civilians, particularly children;
- Urge all parties to **facilitate safe, timely, and unimpeded humanitarian access**, including to detention centers and disembarkation points, in order to provide assistance to children, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets;
- Call on the Libyan authorities to **end arbitrary detention of migrants and refugees**, in particular children; to release those unlawfully detained; to facilitate family reunification; and to immediately put in place measures to prevent torture, sexual violence, or other ill-treatment in detention;
- Call for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be prioritized and fully incorporated in ongoing efforts to build inclusive, sustainable peace**, and encourage and facilitate consideration of children's views in these processes, where possible and compatible with their best interests, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#).

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

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
Ukraine
Yemen

For resolution language on Children and Armed Conflict, download the Children and Armed Conflict smartphone app from Watchlist, Liechtenstein, and Switzerland, available on iPhone, iPad, Android, and the web!

 WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

SOUTH SUDAN

The South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar (SPLA-IO) are listed in the annexes of the SG 2023 annual report on CAAC for committing grave violations against children. In September, the SG is expected to report on the implementation of UNMISS' mandate, pursuant to SCR 2677 (2023). In 2022, the UN verified 466 grave violations against children in South Sudan. According to the SG's June report on UNMISS ([S/2023/433](#)), the UN verified 39 grave violations between February and May 2023. Violations included the killing and maiming of 17 children, the recruitment of 10 boys, the abduction of seven children, one incident of rape, and one incident of denial of humanitarian access. In July, the SCWG-CAAC adopted its fourth [conclusions](#) on the situation of children and armed conflict in South Sudan. **The Security Council should:**

- 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 workers**, and to release and hand over to child protection actors all children from their ranks;
- Call on the Government to **prioritize the reintegration of CAAFAG**, ensure that disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration processes and security sector reform fully take into account the specific needs of children, 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;
- Express concern for ongoing attacks against schools and hospitals, 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 obligations under IHL and IHRL, as well as 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;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC**, as elaborated in its fourth conclusions on South Sudan.

The **United States** is the lead country on South 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](#)), Nigeria ([S/2022/596](#)), and Mali ([S/2022/856](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [June 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [July 2022](#), [October 2022](#), and [February 2023](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for August: United States

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

NGO RESOURCES

Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, et al., [International and Regional Organizations Support the Yemen Declaration for Justice and Reconciliation](#), July 26, 2023

Save the Children, [Darfur: Aid Workers Witness Hundreds of Murdered Bodies Including Children Abandoned in Streets](#), July 13, 2023

Plan International, [Impossible Choices: How Hunger and Conflict Repress Girls' Rights in the Sahel](#), July 11, 2023

World Vision, [World Vision Expresses Deep Concern Over Failed Extension of UNSC Cross-Border Resolution for Syria, Urges Immediate Reconsideration Amid Dire Humanitarian Need](#), July 11, 2023

Save the Children, [Defenceless: The Impact of Israeli Military Detention on Palestinian Children](#), July 10, 2023

Watchlist, [Children and Armed Conflict: A Legal Glossary on Abduction and Deportation](#), July 10, 2023

Save the Children, [Sudan: Children as Young as 12 Raped and Assaulted, as Sexual Violence Rips Through the Country](#), July 7, 2023

Janine Morna, [How the Security Council Can Better Pursue Accountability for International Crimes Against Children](#), July 3, 2023