

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

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) 2023 annual report ([S/2023/363](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for various grave violations against children. In November, MINUSCA's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2659 (2022). In October, the Special Representative of the SG for CAAC (SRSG-CAAC), [briefed](#) the 2127 sanctions committee noting a decrease in verified grave violations as compared to 2021, while stating that violations are believed to be underreported, and emphasizing the need to prioritize prevention of grave violations, tackle prevalent impunity, and scale up child-sensitive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. According to the SG's June report on MINUSCA ([S/2023/442](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 136 grave violations against children in CAR between February and June, the most prevalent of which was recruitment and use (87 cases). **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MINUSCA's child protection mandate**, maintaining sufficient capacity in the child protection unit to fully deliver on this mandate, and ensure child protection continues to be prioritized as a cross-cutting issue;
- 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 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, including through the adoption of a national prevention plan;
- 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 Security Council penholder on CAR.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory is a situation of concern in the SG's latest annual report on CAAC. Since October 7, at least [3,450](#) children have reportedly been killed in Gaza, with an additional [37](#) children reportedly killed in the West Bank, and over [30](#) children reportedly killed in Israel. Thousands more children have reportedly been injured in the ongoing violence. [Children](#) are among those taken hostage by Hamas and other Palestinian armed groups on October 7. As of October 24, the World Health Organization (WHO) has documented [171](#) attacks on healthcare in the Gaza Strip, resulting in the death of [16](#) health care workers and the injury of an addition 30. As of 24 October, [207](#) educational facilities have reportedly been hit, including at least 29 UNRWA schools. Damage to vital civilian infrastructure, along with dire shortages of fuel, water, and medical supplies continue to pose grave consequences for children. Over 600 civil society organizations have signed on to an open [call](#) for an immediate humanitarian ceasefire. Similar calls have been made by the [SG](#) and [jointly](#) by UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO, and the [General Assembly](#) has called for "immediate, durable and sustained humanitarian truce leading to a cessation of hostilities." **The Security Council should:**

- Call for an **immediate humanitarian ceasefire**;
- Call the **immediate, unconditional release of all civilian hostages**, particularly children and their caregivers;
- Unequivocally **condemn all violations and abuses committed against civilians, including grave**

Monthly Update: November 2023

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

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (cont'd)

violations against children, call on all parties to immediately end such abuses and violations, and call for accountability for all perpetrators, including at the domestic level and before the International Criminal Court;

- Urge **respect for obligations under international law, including IHL, IHRL**, and all relevant resolutions of the Security Council regarding the protection of civilians and civilian objects and CAAC, taking all feasible precautions to avoid, and in any event minimize, harm to civilians and civilian objects, including objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, pursuant to SCR 2573 (2021);
- Call for an immediate **end to all attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as schools, health facilities, and protected personnel**, and ensure that such actions are investigated and the perpetrators are duly prosecuted;
- Call for **immediate, safe, and unimpeded access, particularly for medical treatment and delivery of humanitarian aid, to children and other civilians** in need;
- Urge the **SG to list all perpetrators responsible for committing patterns of grave violations against children** in the annexes to his annual reports on CAAC, in accordance with SCR 1379 (2001) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC.

There is no designated Security Council penholder on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

SYRIA

Five parties to conflict are listed for grave violations in the annexes of the SG's 2023 annual report on CAAC. Briefing the UN General Assembly Third Committee in October, the Chair of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria **lamented** "the worst escalation of hostilities in four years," highlighting "what appears to be total disregard for civilian lives," consistent with a longstanding disrespect for IHL. The latest **report** of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism also draws attention to "serious violations of international law arising from the continued mass arbitrary detention, primarily of children, in various detention facilities in the Northeast of the Syrian Arab Republic." In early October, Save the Children reported at least **17** children had been killed and hundreds of others had been injured in five days of violence across Syria. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking concrete measures to prevent and, in any case, minimize child casualties, and call for all perpetrators of grave violations to be held accountable;
- Urge all listed parties, including Syrian Government Forces and the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam, to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent violations against children**, and call on the Syrian Democratic Forces to promptly and fully implement their action plan;
- Recall that all **children formerly 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; call on all parties to **facilitate meaningful and systematic access to children deprived of liberty** for UN and other independent monitors;
- Urge Member States to **facilitate the return of their nationals**, including children of their nationals, held for their or their family members' real or perceived association with ISIL, and undertake individual, rights-based needs assessments, consistent with principles of non-refoulement; provide reintegration and recovery support in line with international law and standards, prioritizing the child's best interests; and prevent children from becoming stateless.

Brazil and Switzerland are the Security Council co-penholders on humanitarian issues in Syria.

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

Presidency of the Security Council for November: China

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

ACTED et al., [Humanitarian Agencies Call for an Immediate and Independent Investigation Following Death of Save the Children Staff Member in Detention](#), October 30, 2023

Legal Action Worldwide (LAW), [The Situation in Israel and Gaza: Legal Analysis by Eminent Professors](#), October 30, 2023

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, [Watchlist Statement on Events in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory](#), October 18, 2023

World Vision, [Conflict Is the Main Cause of Hunger Globally: New Survey Highlights Links Between Conflict and Hunger](#), October 16, 2023

Amnesty International, [Myanmar: 28 civilians killed in military air strike – new investigation and witness testimony](#), October 13, 2023

Action on Armed Violence, [Explosive Violence in September 2023](#), October 10, 2023

Save the Children, [Wellbeing of Yazidi Children in the Aftermath of the 2014 Genocide](#), October 9, 2023