

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
January 2024

HAITI

The Secretary-General (SG) added Haiti as a situation of concern in his 2023 annual report ([S/2023/363](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC). In January, the SG is expected to report on BINUH, pursuant to SCR 2692 (2023). According to the UN, violence in mid-October in La Saline reportedly left over [2,000](#) high school students trapped in clashes, with 60 students trapped for three days. A recent [report](#) by OHCHR highlighted the use of sexual violence as a weapon, including against children. The Child Protection Cluster recorded [84](#) incidents of sexual violence against girls in October 2023 alone. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all human rights violations and abuses committed in Haiti, in particular grave violations against children**, and urge an immediate end to all such violations and abuses, including killing and maiming and rape and other forms of sexual violence;
- Ensure that the Multinational Security Support Mission, authorized by SCR 2699 (2023), **prioritizes and mainstreams the protection of children** during all operations and operational planning; supports the release and recovery of children from armed gangs and their immediate handover to civilian child protection actors; provides protection to and facilitates access for child protection actors; and shares with the UN Working Group on CAAC in Haiti information on grave violations against children that the force may witness;
- Ensure that all troop- and/or police-contributing countries to the Multinational Security Support Mission are **adequately equipped and trained regarding their responsibilities under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, including the protection of civilians, respect for human rights, and addressing gender-based violence and violations and abuses against children;
- Call for **the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, including children;
- Urge donors to swiftly mobilize additional flexible funds to **support the humanitarian response** in Haiti, including resources for child protection.

The **United States** and **Ecuador** are the Security Council penholders on Haiti.

IRAQ

Da'esh is listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for all five "trigger" violations against children. In January, the SG is expected to report on UNAMI, pursuant to SCR 2682 (2023). According to the SG's September report on UNAMI ([S/2023/700](#)), the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 23 grave violations against children between May and September 2023. Violations included the killing and maiming of 13 boys and two girls by explosive remnants of war (ERW), the abduction and acts of sexual violence committed against three girls by Da'esh, the abduction of one boy by PKK, and one attack against a school by unknown perpetrator. The CTFMR also continued to support implementation of the action plan to end and prevent recruitment and use by the Popular Mobilization Forces, including through trainings. **The Security Council should:**

- Call for **the continuation of efforts to fully implement the action plan** to prevent recruitment and use of children by the PMF; and call on all parties to end and prevent all further grave violations against children in Iraq;
- 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;
- Call on Member States, in line with the principle of non-refoulement, to take measures for the release, protection, repatriation, and reintegration of children with alleged links to Da'esh who are held in camps and places of detention in Iraq, in line with 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;

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

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 WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

IRAQ (cont'd)

- Call on the Government to **implement international legal instruments on improvised explosive devices (IEDs), landmines, and other ERW**, and to promote explosive ordnance clearance, in particular before the return of internally displaced persons, and explosive ordnance risk education;
- 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 Security Council penholder on Iraq.

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](#)), Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), and Syria ([S/2023/805](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [September 2021](#), [July 2022](#), and [December 2023](#), respectively.

AFGHANISTAN

In November, the SG published his sixth report on the situation of CAAC in Afghanistan ([S/2023/893](#)), covering the period from January 2021 to December 2022. During this period, the CTFMR verified 4,519 grave violations against children. Following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban in August 2021, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) ceased to exist as a party to conflict. The Taliban, acting as the de facto authorities since August 2021, "has not made any reference to previous domestic law such as the Child Rights Act and/or policy such as the National Child Protection Policy to help guide their efforts on child protection measures. Similarly, no action has been taken by the Taliban to ensure compliance with international standards pertaining to children, such as compliance with the definition of a child as per the CRC." The Taliban was the most prevalent perpetrator of grave violations (1,886), followed by unidentified perpetrators (1,605). Killing and maiming was the most prominent grave violation verified (3,248), followed by the denial of humanitarian access (718) which sharply increased during the reporting period, particularly in 2022. Recruitment and use and attacks on schools and hospitals remained high, and both the military use of schools and hospitals and the detention of children dramatically increased as compared to the previous report. Policies regarding the denial of education to girls, restrictions on humanitarian activities, the definition of a "child" based on physical signs of puberty, the dissolving of Juvenile Justice courts, among others, all raise serious concerns for the protection of children, as well as the ability of survivors of grave violations to access support services. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all continuing grave violations committed against children in Afghanistan**, and demand that all parties **fully uphold their obligations under international law, including IHL and IHRL**;
- Call on the de facto authorities to **abide by Afghanistan's national and international commitments to protect children**, including the definition of a child as any individual under 18 years, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the Paris Principles and Commitments, and the Safe Schools Declaration;
- Call on the de facto authorities to **swiftly reverse the policies and practices restricting the human rights and fundamental freedoms of Afghan women and girls**, including related to their access to education, employment, freedom of movement, and women's full, equal and meaningful participation in public life, pursuant to SCR 2681 (2023);
- **Demand that all parties allow full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access consistent with international law for all humanitarian personnel**, including women, for UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations, and for other humanitarian actors, urge the Taliban to revoke the ban on women working for international and national non-governmental organizations and the UN and to **allow women and girls safe access to humanitarian assistance and basic services**;
- **Call for allocation of sufficient resources to the UN Country Team to strengthen capacities to deliver on its child protection mandate**, including for monitoring and engagement with parties to end and prevent grave violations, and to **address threats posed by landmines, ERW, and IEDs**.

Presidency of the Security Council for January: France

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

Human Rights Watch, [10 Good News Stories for Kids in 2023](#), December 19, 2023

Save the Children, [Stop the War on Children: Let Children Live in Peace](#), December 14, 2023

Amnesty International, [Ukraine: Children's Education is One More Casualty of Russian Aggression](#), December 11, 2023

Save the Children, et al., [NGOs Express Grave Concern Over Suspension of Food Assistance in Yemen](#), December 7, 2023

Save the Children, ["We Are Failing the Children of Gaza": Conditions to Provide Humanitarian Assistance to Children in Gaza Are Not Met](#), December 7, 2023

Human Rights Watch, ["Schools Are Failing Boys Too": The Taliban's Impact on Boys' Education in Afghanistan](#), December 5, 2023