

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 February, the SG will report on the situation in CAR, per SCR 2709 (2023). According to the SG's October report ([S/2023/769](#)), the UN documented a 294 percent increase in grave violations between June and October 2023. This increase was primarily the result of the "high number of self-demobilized children formerly associated with *Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation*, FPRC, and UPC." Humanitarian access continued to face challenges, including in areas where military operations took place and due to explosive ordnance. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children; and call on signatories of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR to uphold their commitments, especially those pertaining to children;
- Call for all parties 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;
- Ensure allocation of **sufficient capacity in MINUSCA's child protection unit to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, per SCR 2709 (2023);
- 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, including through the adoption of a prevention plan; 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.

France is the Security Council penholder on CAR.

SUDAN

Five armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2023 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children in Sudan. In December, SCR 2715 (2023) terminated UNITAMS' mandate. The SG will report to the Council in February on UN efforts to support Sudan "on its path towards peace and stability." The conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Rapid Support Forces, and other armed actors continues to expose children to high levels of grave violations. [Nearly 3.5 million children](#) have been displaced making Sudan the largest child displacement crisis in the world. In January, the OHCHR expert on human rights in Sudan described [violations](#) of human rights and IHL as "continuing unabated," noting civilian casualties, sexual violence against women and girls, rising ethnically motivated violence, child recruitment, and continuing obstacles to the delivery of humanitarian aid, among other violations. The WHO has recorded [60](#) attacks on health care since the onset of the violence in April, including attacks that resulted in 34 deaths and 38 injuries. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking all necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, in accordance with the principles of precaution, distinction, and proportionality; implement commitments under the Jeddah Declaration, and adopt concrete measures to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- Condemn all attacks on humanitarian actors, civilians, especially children, and civilian infrastructure, and call on all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**;

Monthly Update: February 2024

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

SUDAN (cont'd)

- **Reiterate calls for an immediate ceasefire** with clearly articulated timeframes, coordination 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;
- 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; and allow civilians safe passage out of conflict zones;
- Explore credible civilian protection options for Sudan, in collaboration with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; and request the SG to **strengthen the Protection of Civilians mandate of his Personal Envoy**, ensuring sufficient resources to fulfill such a mandate.

The **United Kingdom** is the Security Council penholder on Sudan.

YEMEN

Four parties to conflict are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2023 annual report on CAAC for recruiting and using children. Of these, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) are also listed for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals. The Security Council receives a monthly briefing on Yemen. In October, the Special Representative of the SG for CAAC concluded a [visit](#) to Yemen, where she called for enhanced protections for children affected by armed conflict, including through the continued implementation of action plans, and for child protection to be included in peace negotiations. Following [attacks](#) by the Houthis on commercial and merchant vessels in the Red Sea, the United States and United Kingdom, with the support of other States, carried out a series of military [strikes](#) on targets in Yemen. A group of [26](#) aid organizations operating in Yemen have expressed grave concern at the humanitarian impacts of this escalation, including on the ability to deliver humanitarian aid to the 21 million people, including [11](#) million children, in need of humanitarian assistance and protection. The statement urged "all actors to prioritize diplomatic channels over military options to de-escalate the crisis and safeguard the progress of peace efforts in Yemen," as well as reiterating the need to protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to guarantee safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance. The statement reiterated the call for an "immediate and sustained ceasefire in Gaza to save lives and avert further instability across the region." The Houthis have since [ordered](#) US and UK nationals working for the UN and its humanitarian organizations to leave Yemen within a month. The SG has also [warned](#) against further escalation. **The Security Council should:**

- Call for the protection of civilians, especially children, and civilian infrastructure, and for **immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid** to children and other civilians in need, in accordance with IHL;
- Reiterate support for continued dialogue **towards a comprehensive and inclusive peace process that includes meaningful child participation and protection measures**, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- Call on all parties to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans and other concrete commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children**, including the Government of Yemen's 2014 action plan to end and prevent recruitment and use and the 2018 roadmap, the Security Belt Forces' commitment to and participation in activities under the Government's 2018 roadmap, the Coalition's 2019 memorandum of understanding and related program of activities, and the Houthi's 2022 action plan action plan and handover protocol;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC, as elaborated in its third conclusions** on Yemen; support efforts to ensure sustainable financial resources for child protection activities and programs in Yemen, including for the implementation of warring parties' commitments and of the SCWG-CAAC conclusions and for explosive ordnance removal and risk education.

The **United Kingdom** is the Security Council penholder on Yemen.

Recommendations to the Working Group

The Working Group has not yet adopted conclusions in response to the following reports of the SG on children and armed conflict: Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), and Syria ([S/2023/805](#)), and Afghanistan ([S/2023/893](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [July 2022](#), [December 2023](#), and [January 2024](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for February: Guyana

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 Safe Schools Declaration; has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

[An Open Call to all UN Member States to Stop Fueling the Crisis in Gaza and Avert Further Humanitarian Catastrophe and Loss of Civilian Life](#), January 25, 2024

Médecins Sans Frontières, [Invisible Scars: Unveiling the Mental Health Crisis at Al-Hol Camp in Northeast Syria](#), January 14, 2024

Action on Armed Violence, [Briefing Note: Explosive Weapons Use in Yemen, 2014-2023](#), January 12, 2024

Plan International, [Statement: Killing in Gaza Must Stop – Child Death Toll Reaches 10,000](#), January 12, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Myanmar: Upswing in Unlawful Airstrikes](#), January 11, 2024

Save the Children, [Gaza: 10,000 Children Killed in Nearly 100 Days of War](#), January 11, 2024

Save the Children, [Gaza: More than 10 Children a Day Lose a Limb in Three Months of Brutal Conflict](#), January 7, 2024