

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
August 2024

SOUTH SUDAN

The South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) are listed in the annex of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2024/384](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abduction. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar (SPLM/AIO – pro-Machar) is also listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction. According to the SG's annual report on CAAC, the UN verified 236 grave violations against 221 children in South Sudan in 2023, as well as an additional 75 grave violations that occurred in 2022. Recruitment and use was the most prominent violation, accounting for almost half of the verified violations (152 children). The UN also verified the killing and maiming of 47 children, sexual violence against four girls, the abduction of 32 children, and one incident of the denial of humanitarian access. In August, the Security Council is expected to discuss the SG's latest report on UNMISS, which was circulated in late July pursuant to SCR 2729 (2024). **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 call on the Government to allocate sufficient budgetary resources to support its implementation;
- Urge all parties to **immediately cease all grave violations against children, to facilitate humanitarian assistance and protect humanitarian personnel**, and to release and hand over all children from their ranks to civilian child protection actors;
- Call on all parties to **take immediate and concrete 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;
- Urge the Government to **end impunity for grave violations against children** through timely and impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution; urge allocation of appropriate resources to ensure survivors of grave violations have access to justice, including for rape and other forms of sexual violence; and designate a focal point on CAAC in the Ministry of Justice;
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC**, as elaborated in its [fourth](#) conclusions on South Sudan;
- **Maintain sufficient UNMISS child protection capacity to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, per SCR 2729 (2024).

The **United States** is the Security Council penholders on South Sudan.

SYRIA

Four non-State armed groups and the Syrian Government Forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias are all listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for various grave violations against children. According to the report, Syria remained among the situations with the highest numbers of verified grave violations against children in 2023, with 1,574 grave violations. Recruitment and use was the most recurring violation, with 1,073 children verified as having been recruited and used. Other grave violations included 475 children killed and maimed, sexual violence against one girl, the abduction of four girls, 20 attacks on schools and hospitals, and one incident of the denial of humanitarian access. At the end of 2023, over 800 children remained detained for alleged association with armed groups and approximately 29,000 children with suspected family ties to Da'esh continue to be deprived of liberty in north-eastern Syria. In June, the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam, and their aligned legions and factions, signed an [action plan](#) with the UN to end and prevent the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, taking concrete measures to prevent child casualties, and call for all perpetrators of grave violations to be held accountable;
- Urge all listed parties, including Syrian Government Forces to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent violations against children**, and call on the Syrian Democratic Forces and the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam, to promptly and fully implement their respective action plans;

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
Lake Chad Basin
Mali
Myanmar
Philippines
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen

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SYRIA (con't)

- 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 regular 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 the principle 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.

Switzerland is the Security Council penholder on humanitarian issues in Syria.

UKRAINE

The Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report on CAAC for killing and maiming and for attacks on schools and hospitals. In 2023, the UN verified 938 grave violations against 543 children. The most prominent grave violation was killing and maiming (419 children), followed by attacks on schools and hospitals (335) and abductions (122). In August 2023, the Government of Ukraine signed a joint prevention plan with the UN to prevent grave violations against children. The UN has indicated that the number of children killed and maimed in the first quarter of 2024 increased by **40** percent compared to 2023. On July 8, 2024, Okhmatdyt Hospital, Ukraine's largest children's hospital, came under attack and sustained severe damage in a wave of Russian missile strikes across multiple cities. The strikes reportedly killed a total of **27** people, including four children, and injured an additional 117, including seven children. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking all feasible precautions to avoid harm to civilians, including children, and civilian objects;
- Call for an immediate **end to all attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as education facilities, health facilities, and protected persons**, and ensure that such actions are investigated and the perpetrators are duly prosecuted; **take concrete measures to mitigate and avoid the military use of schools**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021);
- 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;
- Urge the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups to develop, sign, and implement an action plan with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- Call on the Ukrainian Government to continue to implement its joint plan to prevent grave violations against children.

There is no designated Security Council penholder on Ukraine.

Recommendations to the Working Group

The Working Group has received the following reports of the SG on children and armed conflict and conclusions remain pending: Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), Syria ([S/2023/805](#)), and Iraq ([S/2024/247](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [July 2022](#), [December 2023](#), and [May 2024](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for August: Sierra Leone

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, 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

Oxfam, CARE, Humanity & Inclusion, and WeWorld, [Ukraine: NGOs Urge Warring Parties to Protect Civilians](#), July 9, 2024

Save the Children, [Women Self-Inducing Labor and Facing Life-Threatening Complications in Pregnancy after Nine Months of Conflict in Gaza](#), July 8, 2024

ActionAid, et al., [Aid Groups Call on the International Community as Civilians Continue to Pay the Price in Eastern DR Congo](#), July 5, 2024

Save the Children, [Why are Children in Gaza and Sudan at Risk of Famine?](#), July 5, 2024

Save the Children, [Mozambique: Rising Violence Driving Up Children Marriage in Cabo Delgado Providence](#), July 3, 2024

Amnesty International, [Child Protection Urged as the Multinational Support Mission Deploys to Haiti](#), July 2, 2024

Joint Statement from the CEOs of Joining Forces, [Ignoring Children: A Potentially Grave Mistake for the Pact of the Future](#), July 2, 2024