

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
September 2024

AFGHANISTAN

Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-KP), and Taliban forces and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani network, are each listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) latest annual report ([S/2024/384](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for multiple grave violations against children. In 2023, the UN verified 1,865 grave violations against 834 children, a slight increase from 2022. Recruitment and use of children and the denial of humanitarian access both significantly increased in 2023, and the Taliban remained the primary perpetrator of grave violations against children. Explosive ordnance continued to be the most prominent cause of child casualties in 2023, accounting for nearly 83 percent of all child casualties (398 children killed or maimed). This trend has continued into 2024 with the SG's June report on UNAMA ([S/2024/469](#)) documenting 44 children killed and 116 children wounded from unexploded ordnance between February and June 2024. In September, the SG will report on UNAMA, pursuant to SCR 2727 (2024). **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties in Afghanistan **fully uphold their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**; and call on all parties to swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on CAAC as elaborated in its fifth [conclusions](#) on Afghanistan;
- 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;
- Reiterate its 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**, pursuant to SCR 2681 (2023);
- Reiterate its **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, and to **allow women and girls safe access to humanitarian assistance and basic services**;
- Ensure **allocation of sufficient resources to strengthen capacities to deliver on UNAMA's child protection mandate**, including for monitoring and engagement with parties to end and prevent grave violations, and to **address threats posed by explosive ordnance**.

[Japan](#) is the Security Council penholder on Afghanistan.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Sixteen non-State armed groups (NSAGs) and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2024 annual report on CAAC for committing grave violations against children. In 2023, the deadliest year for children in the DRC since the establishment of the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), the UN verified 3,764 grave violations against 2,838 children, representing a significant increase from 2022. Recruitment and use of children by NSAGs was the most prevalent grave violation, followed by killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In September, the SG will report on MONUSCO, pursuant to SCR 2717 (2023). According to the SG's June report on MONUSCO ([S/2024/482](#)), the UN verified 537 grave violations against 483 children between March and April 2024, including 402 cases of recruitment and use. These grave violations were attributed to 19 NSAGs, and three incidents of killing and maiming were attributed to Congolese security forces. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and call for all armed forces and groups to **immediately cease recruiting, using, killing and maiming and abducting children, release those within their ranks**, and engage with the UN to **develop and implement concrete commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children**; including action plans where relevant;
- Urge all parties to take immediate steps to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children and ensure that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection, and call on the Government to **accelerate efforts to implement aspects of its 2012 action plan relating to sexual violence** and the Joint Communique signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict;
- Encourage the Government to **continue its cooperation with the UN on screening and age verification to prevent the recruitment of children**, call for age assessment to be implemented at the territorial

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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 WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

DRC (con't)

- level, and encourage continued efforts to **hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable**;
- Ensure that MONUSCO is adequately resourced to **fully and effectively implement its child protection mandate, per SCR 2717 (2023)**, maintain adequate child protection capacity during MONUSCO's transition, and subsequently **increase child protection capacity in the UN Country Team**, including capacity for monitoring and reporting on grave violations and for continuing to strengthen the capacities of Government Forces and other State actors to protect the rights of conflict-affected children; **ensure drawdown timelines allow appropriate time for planning, resource allocation, and capacity building**;
- Emphasize the need for regional security arrangements, including SAMIDRC, to **fully comply with IHL and IHRL**, and **highlight the importance of coordinated technical support on child protection**, pursuant to SCR 2746 (2024).

France is the Security Council penholder on DRC.

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

SUDAN

In June, the SG published his eighth report on the situation of CAAC in Sudan ([S/2024/443](#)), covering January 2022 to December 2023. During this time, the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 2,168 grave violations against 1,913 children (1,015 boys, 683 girls, 215 sex unknown) – a staggering fourfold increase in grave violations from the previous reporting period. The surge in grave violations is largely attributed to the outbreak of intense conflict between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) on April 15, 2023, with 72 percent of the total violations occurring in the last eight months of 2023. The conflict also stalled and/or drastically reversed progress seen on child protection, including commitments made by parties to the Juba Peace Agreement and through implementation of the 2021 roadmap. Recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access all rose sharply when compared to the previous report ([S/2022/627](#)). In particular, recruitment and use saw a tenfold increase with 277 children recruited and used. Killing and maiming increased by over 400 percent with 1,525 children and was the most verified grave violation. Notably, in his 2024 annual report on CAAC, the SG newly listed the RSF in the annexes for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals; the SAF for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals; and the Third Front-Tamazuj for recruitment and use. **The Working Group Should:**

- Strongly condemn the staggering increase in grave violations committed against children in Sudan, and demand that all parties **immediately end and prevent all violations and abuses against children and uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**; and urge those with influence over the parties to **use all their leverage to end and prevent further grave violations against children**;
- Urge all armed parties to **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and prevent and end all child recruitment and use**; reiterate that children associated with armed forces and groups should be treated primarily as victims and call on Sudanese authorities to **continue implementing the 2018 standard operating procedures for the release and handover of children associated with armed groups**;
- Express grave concern at the significant increase in the number of children killed and maimed, and **call on all parties to take concrete steps to prevent child casualties**, respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution;
- Demand that all parties **take concrete steps to end rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; immediately cease attacks or threats against schools and hospitals, their personnel, and other civilian objects**; and avoid the military use of schools; and express grave concern at the lack of access for children to protection services, education, and healthcare as a result of the armed conflict;
- 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.

Presidency of the Security Council for September: Slovenia

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

Save the Children, [Sudan: Hundreds of Unaccompanied Children Among Thousands Fleeing Latest Surge in Fighting](#), August 22, 2024

Plan International, [Thousands of Displaced People, Including Children, in Haiti Face Critical Conditions](#), August 19, 2024

World Vision, [Unprecedented: The crisis for children and families in Sudan](#), August 19, 2024

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Colombia: Millions Now Living in Conflict Zones](#), August 15, 2024

Save the Children, [Children Among More Than 100 Killed in Gaza's Worst School Attack in 10 Months](#), August 10, 2024

Save the Children, [Ukraine Child Casualties See Alarming Spike as 2024 War Marks 900 Days](#), August 9, 2024