

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
October 2024

HAITI

Haiti is a situation of concern in the Secretary-General's (SG) annual report ([S/2024/384](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC). In September, the Security Council renewed the mandate of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) in Haiti, unanimously adopting Resolution 2751 (2024). According to the SG's June report on Haiti ([S/2024/508](#)), covering January to June 2024, armed groups, primarily in the Port-au-Prince area, were responsible for a series of grave violations against children. The UN documented the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, as well as widespread sexual and gender-based violence, particularly targeting displaced women and girls. In addition, the report noted 52 children were killed, and 26 children were abducted during the report period. Sexual exploitation of girls was an alarming trend, further exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. Schools and hospitals were frequently attacked, limiting access to essential services. The SG's report highlights the growing challenges in child protection, with limited capacity to assist children escaping armed violence. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all human rights violations and abuses committed against civilians in Haiti, including grave violations against children,** and urge an immediate end to all such violations and abuses;
- Ensure that the **MSS prioritizes and mainstreams the protection of children** during all operations; supports the release and recovery of children from armed groups and their immediate handover to civilian child protection actors; provides protection to and facilitates access for child protection actors to affected children; and shares with the UN Working Group on CAAC in Haiti information on grave violations against children, as appropriate;
- **Welcome the January 2024 handover protocol** between the Government of Haiti and the United Nations and encourage its full and consistent implementation, including through sufficient child protection capacities;
- Call for **the safe and unimpeded 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 co-penholders on Haiti.

SOMALIA

Al-Shabaab is listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report ([S/2024/384](#)) on CAAC for all five 'trigger' violations, and *Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a* (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use. The Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force are each listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. In 2023, the UN verified 2,283 grave violations against 1,802 children, with Al-Shabaab remaining the primary perpetrator. Children were detained for alleged association with armed groups, with 278 children verified as detained by Government Security Forces. The SG's report highlights the continued killing and maiming of children, with explosive ordnance responsible for a significant number of casualties. In October, UNSOM's mandate is up for renewal, per SCR 2705 (2023). In September, the SG's Special Representative for CAAC and the Committee on the Rights of the Child condemned the August 17, 2024, execution of four young adults in Puntland, Somalia, for crimes committed as children while associated with Al-Shabaab. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **fully uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, immediately cease all grave violations against children, and release all children within their ranks and hand them over to civilian child protection actors; call on the Federal Government of Somalia to **strengthen accountability for all grave violations committed against children**;
- Strongly condemn the recent execution of four young adults for their association with Al-Shabaab while they were children, and call on the Federal Government and Puntland authorities to **treat children allegedly associated with armed forces or groups primarily as victims**, in line with the Paris Principles and Commitments; and recall that the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and the Provisional Constitution of Somalia, all define a child as any person under the age of 18 and that Article 37 of the CRC specifically prohibits the use of death penalty against minors;

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

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

SOMALIA (con't)

- Urge the Federal Government to **fully implement its 2012 action plans** on recruitment and use and killing and maiming, as well as its 2019 roadmap; to **swiftly engage with the UN to strengthen its commitments to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence** against children; and to **consistently apply the 2014 Standard Operating Procedures for the reception and handover of children separated from armed groups to civilian child protection actors; and to swiftly implement the age verification guidelines and its standardized checklist** endorsed by the Federal Government in July 2023;
- Emphasize the need to **maintain resources to allow UNSOM to fully deliver on its mandated responsibilities** including those related to child protection and monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children; underline the need to prioritize measures to address conflict-related impact on children during ongoing and future military operations in Somalia in light of the phased drawdown of ATMIS, and reiterate that joint commitments on CAAC are important mitigation measures for UN support to non-UN security forces per the UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy.

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

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](#)), Syria ([S/2023/805](#)), Sudan ([S/2024/443](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#) and [December 2023, September 2024](#) respectively.

NIGERIA

In July, the Secretary-General published his fourth report on the situation of CAAC in Nigeria ([S/2024/559](#)), covering January 2022 to December 2023. During this period, the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 2,519 grave violations against 1,250 children. The number of grave violations increased significantly compared to the previous reporting period (694). Abduction (1,105 children) remained the most prevalent violation, and in 2023, the number of abducted children (859) was the highest recorded since 2014. Recruitment and use (821) and sexual violence (439) also rose dramatically compared to the previous report. The surge in violations is partially attributed to increased access for verification, as well as mass defection of Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) members and their subsequent surrender to Government forces, which allowed children to escape captivity. JAS and ISWAP remain listed in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report for all five 'trigger' grave violations. **The Working Group should:**

- Strongly condemn all violations committed against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**; urge all parties to **end and prevent all grave violations against children, including an immediate cessation of all abduction, recruitment and use, and rape and sexual violence of children**;
- Welcome child protection laws adopted in Borno, Adamawa, and Yobe States; and **encourage strengthened accountability for perpetrators of grave violations**, including rape and other forms of sexual violence, and support comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services for child survivors of sexual violence;
- **Welcome the adoption in September 2022 of handover protocol** for children encountered in the course of armed conflict in Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin Region; and call on the Government to ensure its full and consistent implementation and to endorse the Paris Principles and Commitments; reiterate to all parties that **children affected by armed conflict should be treated primarily as victims**, including those allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist by the UN; their **reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards**;
- Call on the Government and the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) to continue **sustaining gains made through implementation of the CJTF's 2017 action plan and to swiftly implement its remaining provisions** on trainings on children's rights and establishing accountability mechanisms;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children; and **respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure**.

Presidency of the Security Council for September: Switzerland

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, [Gaza: Israeli Attacks Devastate Lives of Children with Disabilities](#), September 30, 2024.

UNICEF, ['Tragedy upon tragedy' in Lebanon as death and displacement mount](#), September 26, 2024.

Save the Children, [Sudan: Children Under Fire as Parts of Country Record Most Violent Month Since February](#), September 24, 2024.

Save the Children, [In Syria Children Losing their Future as Violence Escalates](#), September 10, 2024.

World Vision, [Unfinished Business: The progress in policies to end violence against children](#), September 9, 2024.

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Colombia: Stop Attacks on Education](#), September 5, 2024.