

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
December 2024

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 Secretary General's (SG) 2024 annual report ([S/2024/384](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for committing grave violations against children. In December, MONUSCO's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2717 (2023). According to the SG's September report on MONUSCO ([S/2024/689](#)), the UN verified 336 grave violations against 285 children (203 boys and 82 girls) between June and August 2024, including 127 abductions and 106 cases of recruitment and use. These grave violations were attributed to M23 and 14 other armed groups, while seven incidents of sexual violence and four cases of killing and maiming were attributed to Congolese security forces. The Security Council should:

- Renew MONUSCO's child protection mandate, with adequate resources to **fully and effectively implement its child protection mandate**, including preserving child protection residual capacities during MONUSCO's transition, noting the transfer of the chairmanship of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) from MONUSCO to the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and encourage all UN Country Team members to contribute to the CAAC mandate, including capacity for monitoring and reporting on grave violations and strengthening the capacities of parties to the conflict to protect the rights of conflict-affected children; **ensure drawdown timelines allow appropriate time for planning, resource allocation, and capacity building**;
- 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 its 2012 action plan to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence** and the Joint Communiqué signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict;
- Reiterate the need for regional security arrangements, including SAMIDRC, to **fully comply with international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and **highlight the importance of coordinated technical support on child protection**, per SCR 2746 (2024).

France is the Security Council penholder on DRC.

YEMEN

The Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) are listed in the annexes of the SG's latest report on CAAC for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and attacks on schools and hospitals. Security Belt Forces, pro-government militias, including the Salafists, and popular committees, and Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, are also each listed for recruitment and use. The Security Council receives a monthly briefing on Yemen, pursuant to SCR 2747 (2024). According to [UNICEF](#), from January to June 2024, the UN documented 67 grave violations against children in Yemen, including 10 children killed (boys) and 23 children injured (18 boys, 5 girls) primarily due to explosive devices, including unexploded ordnance (51.5 per cent). In a [joint statement](#), the Principals of the affected UN entities and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) renewed urgent calls for the immediate release of their staff arbitrarily detained by the Houthi de facto authorities in Yemen, amid reports that some of them may now face "criminal prosecution." **The Security Council should:**

- Call for the immediate and unconditional release of all detained UN and civil society workers, and demand that all parties fully comply with obligations under IHL and IHRL, including allowing and facilitating the **immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid** to children and other civilians in need;
- 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 the Government of Yemen, the Security Belt Forces, the Amaliqah Brigades and all groups affiliated with the Presidential Leadership Council to **fully and swiftly implement all relevant activities under the Government's 2014 action plan and 2018 roadmap**, including the adoption of a handover protocol on the release of children detained during military operations;

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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YEMEN (Con't)

- Call on the Houthis to **fully and swiftly implement the 2022 action plan and handover protocol**, in close collaboration with the UN, notably conducting age assessments in recruitment centers and granting unimpeded access for the UN to all places of detention of children;
- Call on all parties to **fully and swiftly 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, 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 received the following reports of the SG on children and armed conflict and conclusions remain pending: Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Syria ([S/2023/805](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#) and [December 2023](#), respectively.

DRC

In October, the SG released his ninth report ([S/2024/705](#)) on the situation of CAAC in the DRC, covering the period from April 2022 to March 2024. During this period, the CTFMR verified 8,208 grave violations against 6,196 children (4,325 boys, 1,871 girls) by 77 parties, representing an eight percent increase from the previous report. Non-State armed groups were responsible for 98 percent of verified violations, while Government forces were responsible for two percent (187). Recruitment and use (4,006), abduction (2,028), and killing and maiming (1,298) were the most verified violations. While rape and other forms of sexual violence (662) and attacks on schools and hospitals (193) saw a 30 percent decrease, all other grave violations increased, with alarming rises in abduction (31 percent), killing and maiming (40 percent), and denial of humanitarian access (62 percent). Sexual violence continued to be the violation most attributed to Government forces, primarily the FARDC. The CTFMR also verified the detention of 142 children for alleged association with armed groups, as well as 55 incidents of the military use of schools. The reporting period was marked by a deteriorating security and humanitarian situation, increased fighting between the FARDC and the resurgent M23 in North Kivu, as well as the beginning of MONUSCO's gradual withdrawal. **The Working Group should:**

- **Strongly condemn all continuing violations and abuses committed against children** in the DRC, express grave concern at the increase in verified grave violations against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Welcome the Government's continued efforts to **consolidate the gains of the 2012 action plan**, call for the **swift and full operationalization of the national strategy for implementation of the Demobilization, Disarmament, Community Recovery, and Stabilization Program (P-DDRCS)**, integrating gender-specific considerations to address the needs of girls associated with armed groups and armed forces;
- Call on Member States and donors to **support and ensure predictable funding for child protection efforts in light of the phased withdrawal of MONUSCO**;
- Urge all armed groups to **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and end and prevent all child recruitment and use**; reiterate that children associated with armed forces and groups should be treated primarily as victims and call on the Government to ensure children formerly associated with armed groups are handed over to civilian child protection actors in compliance with its 2013 directives and the Paris Principles;
- Call on all parties to take immediate and specific steps to **end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including by ensuring perpetrators are held accountable and 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 Communiqué signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks and threats of attack on educational and health facilities and personnel**, as well as to refrain from the military use of schools, and encourage the Government to follow up on implementation of its 2017 Safe Schools Declaration roadmap.

Presidency of the Security Council for December: United States

Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocol III, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and ILO Convention 182. Not a party to Additional Protocols I-II to the Geneva Conventions, nor the Rome Statute of the ICC and is the only UN Member State that has not ratified the CRC. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Latest escalation of violence in Syria another blow to children as eight killed and thousands forced to flee](#), November 29, 2024

Danish Refugee Council, [Killing Long After They Fall: The Cost of Active Warfare and Explosive Ordnance on Civilians in Gaza](#), November 26, 2024

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, [Implementing the 'Children and Armed Conflict' Agenda: Analyzing Data on Trends, Enabling Factors, and Persistent Challenges in Situations with Listed Parties](#), November 21, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Colombia Charges Former FARC Leaders with Child Recruitment](#), November 20, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Myanmar: Surging Landmine Use Claims Lives, Livelihoods](#), November 20, 2024

Amnesty International, [Ukraine: Russian Strikes Amounting to War Crimes Continue to Kill and Injure Children](#), November 18, 2024

ChildFund Alliance, WeWorld, [World Index 2024: ChildFund Alliance World Index on the Rights of Women and Children – Focus: Children's Voices on Their Right to the Future](#), November 13, 2024