

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
January 2025

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 November, Special Representative of the SG for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSR-CAAC), highlighted [alarming trends](#) in Haiti in recent months, reporting a more than 1,000 percent increase in verified cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, particularly girls, in 2024 compared to 2023. The UN estimates that around 2.7 million people, including 1.6 million women and children, live in areas controlled by armed gangs. Armed groups have used sexual violence, including rape and gang rape, as a weapon of war, while coercing children into their ranks. Children have been forcibly recruited into these groups, with 30-50 percent of armed group members now [reportedly](#) under the age of 18. In January, the Security Council is expected to receive its regular report on the implementation of the Multinational Security Support Mission (MSS) in Haiti, pursuant to SCR 2751 (2024). **The Security Council should:**

- 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;
- 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;
- Call for **the safe and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, including children;
- Encourage the Government of Haiti to fully and consistently implement its **January 2024 handover protocol**, including through sufficient child protection capacities;
- Urge donors to swiftly mobilize additional flexible funds to **support the humanitarian response** in Haiti, including resources for child protection.

The **United States** is the Security Council penholder on Haiti.

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY

In the SG's 2024 annual report on CAAC, the Israeli armed and security forces are listed in the annexes for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals, Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades are each listed for killing and maiming and abduction. As of November 2024, [44,382](#) Palestinians were reported killed in the Gaza Strip since the start of hostilities, with at least 585 attacks on healthcare facilities. On November 21, 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) [issued](#) arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, former Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, and Hamas military commander Mohammed Deif. In November 2024, the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices [reported](#) to the General Assembly that Israel's actions in Gaza during the war exhibited characteristics consistent with genocide, highlighting mass civilian casualties, deliberate obstruction of humanitarian aid, and the use of starvation as a weapon of war. Both [Amnesty International](#) and [Human Rights Watch](#) have concluded that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. In December, the General Assembly [adopted](#) two resolutions calling for immediate ceasefire and the release of hostages. **The Security Council should:**

- **Unequivocally condemn all violations and abuses committed against civilians**, in particular the unprecedented number of grave violations against children as verified by the UN; call on all parties to immediately end such abuses and violations, and call for accountability for all perpetrators, including at the domestic level and before the ICC;
- **Demand that all parties fully comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**; and call on all parties to immediately and fully implement all relevant Security Council Resolutions, in particular, 2712 (2023), 2720 (2023), 2728 (2024), and 2735 (2024), as well as resolutions on the protection of civilians and humanitarian personnel and on CAAC;

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!



ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORY (Con't)

- Call for an immediate **end to all attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as schools, health facilities, and protected personnel**, and ensure that such actions are investigated, and the perpetrators are duly prosecuted;
- Call for the **immediate, safe, and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors for the delivery of humanitarian aid, including medical services, to children and other civilians** in need, and for the facilitation of medical evacuations of critically sick and injured children with caregivers;
- Urge the Israeli armed and security forces, Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions, and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades to **immediately cease all grave violations against children and to urgently engage with the UN to develop, sign, and implement time-bound, concrete action plans** to end and prevent grave violations against children.

There is no designated Security Council penholder on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

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 2024 annual report on CAAC for various grave violations against children. Syria remained among the situations with the highest numbers of verified grave violations against children in 2023, with 1,574 grave violations. On December 8, 2024, former Syrian President Bashar Al-Assad was **ousted** following major offensive launched by a coalition of armed opposition groups, including Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and factions of the Syrian National Army. Members of the Security Council **called** for the implementation of an inclusive and Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process based on the key principles listed in resolution 2254 (2015) that is facilitated by the UN. As the situation continues to evolve, the SRSG-CAAC **emphasized** the importance of prioritizing children's rights and needs during this transitional period to ensure sustainable peace and stability. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and call for all perpetrators of grave violations to be held accountable;
- Reiterate 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 for the **protection, rights, well-being, and empowerment of children to be fully incorporated and prioritized in efforts to build inclusive, sustainable peace**, and encourage and facilitate the inclusion of children's views in these processes, where possible and compatible with their best interests, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- 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.

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](#)), and the Democratic Republic of Congo ([S/2024/705](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [December 2023](#), and [December 2024](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for January: Algeria

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, and ILO Convention 182. Not a party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [2024 In Review - One in three children in conflict and fragile countries out of school – new analysis](#), December 27, 2024

Save the Children, [2024 In Review: 10 positive outcomes for children this year](#), December 26, 2024

Sudan INGO Forum, [Famine in Sudan: INGOs call out deadly delays and inadequate response](#), December 24, 2024

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, [A Look Back at Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict in 2024](#), December 19, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Sudan: Fighters Rape Women and Girls, Hold Sex Slaves](#), December 15, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Mali: Atrocities by the Army and Wagner Group](#), December 12, 2024