

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:  
February 2025

### 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. Explosive ordnance continues to be the most prominent cause of child casualties in Afghanistan. According to UNAMA's [report](#) on the human rights situation in Afghanistan from October to December 2024, explosive remnants of war led to 47 child casualties (eight girls, 39 boys). Ongoing violence and the presence of explosive ordnance near schools continue to obstruct children's access to education and basic services, limit their freedom of movement and jeopardize their safety. According to the UN, the exclusion of women and girls from most facets of life, including education and the workforce, "has significantly [increased](#) their protection risks and worsened an already deeply challenging humanitarian situation." UNAMA's mandate is up for renewal in March, per 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)**;
- 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 rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access consistent with international law to humanitarian personnel**, including women, to provide **humanitarian assistance and protection services to civilians**;
- Call on parties to **ensure that civilians, including women and girls, are allowed unrestricted access to humanitarian assistance and basic services**;
- Ensure the **allocation of sufficient resources to strengthen capacities to the child protection mandate**, including for monitoring and engaging with parties to end and prevent grave violations, and to **address threats posed by explosive ordnance**.

At the time of writing, the Security Council penholders for 2025 remain pending.

### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Local militias known as anti-balaka, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique* (FPRC), *Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique* (MPC), and *Union pour la paix en Centrafrique* (UPC) are each listed in the annex of the SG's 2024 annual report on CAAC for multiple grave violations against children. In February, the SG will report on the situation in CAR and MINUSCA per SCR 2759 (2024). According to UNICEF's latest [Humanitarian Situation Report](#) on CAR, between August and September 2024, 537 children associated with armed groups were identified and referred for reintegration services, with 315 confirmed as formerly associated and enrolled in case management programs. In October, the Security Council Working Group on CAAC adopted its latest conclusions on the situation of CAAC in CAR ([S.AC.51/2024/5](#)). **The Security Council should:**

- **Demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children;
- Urge the MPC, FPRC, and UPC to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans** and release all children still in their ranks, and call for all parties to **end and prevent grave violations against children**, including by engaging with the UN to sign and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations against children;

**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

## CAR (Con't)

- Call on the Government to **fully implement all aspects of the Child Protection Code and the national plan on the prevention of grave violations against children** and to **ensure perpetrators of grave violations are held accountable** and that child survivors of sexual violence have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services, and strengthen preventive measures; urge the Government and pro-government forces to **cease the military use of schools and to vacate all schools**;
- Urge the Government and pro-government forces to **operationalize the Handover Protocol signed in October 2024** on the protection and transfer of children associated to armed forces and groups to civilian authorities, in collaboration with the UN.

France is the Security Council penholder on CAR.

## SUDAN

The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and six additional armed groups are each listed in the annexes of the SG's latest annual report (S/2024/384) on CAAC for multiple grave violations against children. In 2023, the UN verified 1,721 grave violations against children, a staggering 480 per cent increase from the previous year. Recruitment and use of children significantly increased in 2023, with 209 cases verified. A total of 1,244 children were killed and maimed, primarily through crossfire, shelling, and aerial bombardments, with the RSF and SAF identified as main perpetrators. Sexual violence against children, affecting 114 girls, was predominantly attributed to the RSF, unidentified actors, and affiliated militia groups. Attacks on schools and hospitals remained a concern, with 85 verified incidents attributed to both state and non-state actors. In January 2025, Special Representative of the SG for CAAC (SRSG-CAAC), **condemned** the recent attacks in Khartoum State and highlighted the deliberate targeting of children and their recruitment into armed groups, noting the heightened risks of sexual violence faced by girls. In resolution 2736 (2024), the Security Council requested the SG to make recommendations on the protection of civilians in the Sudan. In February, the SG is expected to report on UN efforts to support Sudan, pursuant to Resolutions 2715 (2024) and 2736 (2024). **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking all necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, in accordance with the principles of precaution, distinction, and proportionality; and adopt concrete measures to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- Condemn all attacks on humanitarian actors, civilians, especially children, and civilian infrastructure, and call on all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**;
- Call on the listed parties in Sudan to **swiftly nominate focal points able to engage with the UN to develop, sign, and implement action plans** to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- **Reiterate calls for an immediate ceasefire** with clearly articulated timeframes, coordination with relevant regional and subregional organizations and humanitarian actors to establish such a ceasefire, as well as to prevent further violations and abuses against civilians, including children;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance and protection services to affected populations**, especially children; and respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure; and allow civilians safe passage out of conflict zones;
- Explore credible civilian protection options for Sudan, in collaboration with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; and request the SG to strengthen the Protection of Civilians mandate of his Personal Envoy, ensuring sufficient resources to fulfill such a mandate;
- Underline the need to strengthen child protection capacities in the Sudan, including to ensure continued implementation of the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism.

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

## 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 February: China

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; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration nor the Vancouver Principles.

## NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [More than 46,000 children out of school in Catatumbo Region in Colombia, facing threats of kidnapping, recruitment, and violence](#), January 31, 2025

World Vision, [Children Pay a Heavy Price as Clashes Resume Between the M23 and the Congolese Army in Eastern DR Congo](#), January 24, 2025

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Escalation in the West Bank: Violations surge amid fragile ceasefire in Gaza](#), January 23, 2025

Amnesty International, [Israel/OPT: Tragically overdue ceasefire will not repair lives of Palestinians shattered by Israel's genocide in Gaza](#), January 15, 2025

Save the Children, [Gaza: Any pause must become a definitive ceasefire to protect children and allow life-saving services](#), January 15, 2025