

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

**Monthly Update:
August 2025**

SOUTH SUDAN

In his 2025 annual report ([S/2025/247](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC), the Secretary-General (SG) continued to list the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) in the annex for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abduction as well as the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar (SPLM/AIO – pro-Machar) for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction. In 2024, the UN verified 126 grave violations against 109 children and 7 grave violations that occurred in previous years. The UN verified the recruitment and use of 68 children, primarily by unidentified perpetrators and the SSPDF. 63 children were released; the report does not specify which parties were responsible. The UN also verified the killing and maiming of 23 children, the abduction of 25 children, sexual violence against seven girls, and three incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals. The South Sudan National Police Service detained 16 boys for their actual or alleged association with armed groups. In September 2024, the Government, in coordination with the UN, [convened](#) its third national conference on the prevention of child recruitment, highlighted its progress under the 2020 Action Plan, and committed to strengthening screening, accountability, and legal responses. In August, the SG will report on implementation of the UNMISS mandate per SCR 2779 (2025). **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and engage with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children; and demand accountability for all perpetrators;
- Urge the Government and parties that have endorsed the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to **fully and swiftly implement their commitments**, and urge all parties to **immediately cease all grave violations against children**, and to **release and hand over to child protection actors all children from their ranks**, their reintegration should be prioritized in line with international juvenile justice standards, and detention should only be used as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate time;
- Urge the Government to **end impunity for grave violations against children** through timely and impartial investigation and, where appropriate, prosecution; urge allocation of appropriate resources to ensure survivors of grave violations have access to justice, including for rape and other forms of sexual violence; and designate a focal point on CAAC in the Ministry of Justice;
- Encourage the Government to continue **strengthening efforts to prevent the recruitment and use of children**, as well as other grave violations, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, including girls;
- Call on all parties to **take immediate and specific 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.

The **United States** is the Security Council penholder on South Sudan.

SYRIA

In the annexes of his 2025 annual report on CAAC, the SG continued to list Syrian government forces, and four non-state armed actors for various grave violations against children. From January 1 to December 8, 2024, the UN verified 1,301 grave violations against 1,205 children, as well as 64 violations that occurred in previous years. Recruitment and use remained widespread, with 527 children affected, and most used in combat roles. The UN also verified the killing and maiming of 672 children, 70 attacks on schools and hospitals, 18 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, the abduction of 14 children, and the military use of 13 schools and hospitals. Two boys were detained for their alleged association with armed groups, and approximately 1,000 children remained deprived of liberty, with another 25,500 held in Hawl and Rawj camps for suspected family ties to Da'esh. Recent [hostilities](#) in Syria have resulted in the killing and maiming of children and damage to critical civilian infrastructure. Following escalating violence in the Suweida governorate, the SG unequivocally [condemned](#) all violence against civilians and called for urgent measures to facilitate humanitarian access. He also condemned Israel's escalatory airstrikes, urging respect for Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international law, including IHL and IHRL**; and urge all parties to **end and prevent all grave violations against children**;
- Call on the interim government to **allow and facilitate unimpeded, rapid, and safe access to ensure the delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children;

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Haiti
Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory
Lake Chad Basin
Mali
Myanmar
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen

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WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

SYRIA (Con't)

- 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 and best interests in these processes, where possible and compatible with their best interests, pursuant to SCR 2427 (2018) and drawing on the [Practical Guidance for Mediators](#);
- 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;
- 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 Da'esh, 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.

Denmark is the Security Council penholder on humanitarian issues in Syria.

UKRAINE

In his 2025 annual report on CAAC, the SG continued to list the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups for killing and maiming and for attacks on schools and hospitals. The SG moved Ukraine under section A of Annex I to reflect its regular discussion by the Security Council. The UN verified 1,914 grave violations against 673 children in 2024, representing a 105 percent increase from 2023. The UN also verified 671 cases of killing and maiming, primarily caused by explosive weapons, the use of two boys by Russian armed forces and affiliated groups, 862 attacks on schools and hospitals, and 379 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. The report also verified the detention of eight children. While no incidents of sexual violence or abduction were verified, the Secretary-General welcomed the reunification of two children abducted in 2022 and called for the return of the remaining separated children. The report also states that the UN "documented" 120 children killed and maimed in the territory of the Russian Federation, however these cases are unverified.

The Security Council should:

- Express grave concern at the significant increase in verified grave violations against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking all feasible precautions to avoid harm to civilians, including children, and civilian objects; and call on all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**;
- Call for an immediate **end to all attacks on objects indispensable to the survival of the civilian population, as well as education facilities, health facilities, and protected persons**, and ensure that such actions are investigated and the perpetrators are duly prosecuted; **take concrete measures to mitigate and avoid the military use of schools**, pursuant to SCR 2601 (2021);
- 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;
- Urge the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups to develop, sign, and implement an action plan with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- Reiterate the SG's call on Russia to cooperate with the UN for the return of Ukrainian children and reunification of such children with their families and/or guardians;
- Welcome the extension of the joint prevention plan with the Government of Ukraine and the United Nations to prevent grave violations against children and positive advances in this regard.

There is no designated Security Council penholder on Ukraine.

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: Syria ([S/2023/805](#)), the Democratic Republic of Congo ([S/2024/705](#)), and Mali ([S/2024/883](#)), Burkina Faso ([S/2025/101](#)), and Myanmar ([S/2025/81](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [December 2023](#), [December 2024](#), [March 2025](#), and [May 2025](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for August: Panama

Party to Geneva Conventions I–IV, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and ILO Convention 182; party to the Rome Statute of the ICC. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and the Safe Schools Declaration; has not endorsed the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Colombia: An attack on education every three days](#), July 31, 2025

Human Rights Watch, [Myanmar: Arakan Army Oppresses Rohingya Muslims](#), July 28, 2025

World Vision, [The deadly threat to Afghan children as mine action faces funding shortfalls](#), July 14, 2025

Human Rights Watch, [Submission on the Situation of Persons with Disabilities in Gaza and the West Bank](#), July 11, 2025

Amnesty International, [Gaza: Evidence points to Israel's continued use of starvation to inflict genocide against Palestinians](#), July 3, 2025

Save the Children, [Sudan: Sharp rise in attacks on healthcare after two years of conflict with 1,000 people killed this year](#), July 3, 2025