Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

In his 2026 annual report (S/2026/357) on children and armed conflict (CAAC), the Secretary-General (SG) listed six nonstate armed groups in CAR for committing grave violations against children. According to the SG's June 2026 report on the CAR, MINUSCA documented 189 grave violations against children between February and May 2026. Recruitment and use accounted for the largest proportion of violations (39 percent), followed by abduction (24 percent), rape and other forms of sexual violence (21 percent), killing and maiming, denial of humanitarian access, and attacks against schools and hospitals. Child protection concerns persisted, including the forced recruitment of children by self-defense groups, continued abductions by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and conflict-related sexual violence affecting girls. MINUSCA's child protection responses remained severely underfunded, with only 0.5 percent of required funding received. In November, MINUSCA's mandate is up for renewal per SCR 2800 (2025). **The Security Council should**:

- **Demand that all parties uphold their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL);**
- Renew MINUSCA's child protection mandate and ensure allocation of **sufficient capacity to MINUSCA's child protection unit, including through dedicated child protection advisers, to fully deliver on this mandate;**
- Reiterating that all **children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) should be treated primarily as victims**, urge all parties to accelerate ongoing efforts to release children from their ranks; **end and prevent grave violations against children**, by engaging with the UN to sign and implement action plans; urge the MPC, FPRC, and UPC to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans** and release all remaining children in their ranks;
- Urge donors to swiftly mobilize additional flexible funds to **support the humanitarian response** in the CAR, including resources for child protection and reintegration programs;
- 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 and other grave violations have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services, and strengthen preventive measures.

FRANCE IS THE SECURITY COUNCIL PENHOLDER ON CAR.

YEMEN

In the annexes of his 2026 annual report on CAAC, the SG continued to list Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula and the pro-government militias for child recruitment and use, as well as the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) for killing and maiming and recruitment and use of children. On October 15, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict warned that the escalating hostilities in Yemen were placing children at heightened risk of grave violations and threatening child protection gains. Since September 3, 2026, the UN has documented more than 60 grave violations against children, amid increasing reports of child recruitment and use, killing and maiming, including from explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA), and destruction of schools. At least 200,000 people have been displaced since hostilities resumed, exacerbating protection risks for children, while humanitarian access constraints continue to impede aid delivery in Houthi-controlled areas. **The Security Council should**:

- **Express grave concern at the increase in hostilities; demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL; and call on parties to avoid the use of EWIPA;**
- Demand that all parties allow and facilitate the **immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to children and other civilians in need;**
- Call on parties to **immediately cease attacks on schools** and urge the Yemeni authorities to continue to **uphold commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration**;
- Call on Yemen Armed Forces and affiliated armed forces and groups, 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 further capacity-building for officers and a complaints mechanism;

Monthly Update: November 2026

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
Nigeria
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen

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- Call on the Houthis to **fully and swiftly implement the 2022 action plan and handover protocol,** in close collaboration with the UN, notably through the prompt release and formal handover of all children associated with the group, and continue conducting age assessments in recruitment centers and training of officers on child protection and granting unimpeded access for the UN to all places of detention of children;
- Call for the **immediate and unconditional release of all arbitrarily detained personnel** from UN, non-governmental, and civil society organizations as well as from diplomatic missions.

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: Mali (S/2024/883), Burkina Faso (S/2025/101), Myanmar (S/2025/81), Yemen (S/2025/113), South Sudan (S/2025/317), Syria (S/2025/535), and Somalia (S/2025/735). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from March 2025, May 2025, June 2025, September 2025, December 2025, and February 2026, respectively.

AFGHANISTAN

In September 2026, the SG released his seventh report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Afghanistan (S/2026/728), covering January 2023 to December 2025. During this period, the UN verified 4,582 grave violations against 1,993 children (1,658 boys, 324 girls and 11 sex unknown). Most violations were attributed to the Taliban (3,180). The most prevalent violation was denial of humanitarian access (2,241 incidents), representing a 189 percent increase compared with the previous reporting period, followed by killing and maiming (1,415 children, including 446 killed and 969 maimed), with explosive ordnance accounting for 80 percent of child casualties. Recruitment and use increased by 81 percent to 557 boys, all attributed to the Taliban. The UN also verified 338 attacks on schools and hospitals, 24 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and seven abductions. The military use of 64 schools and one hospital also deprived 32,500 children of access to education. The SG expressed concern over increasing restrictions on humanitarian access, continued child recruitment, the detention of children for alleged association with armed groups, and restrictions on girls' education and female humanitarian workers. Despite these challenges, engagement with the Taliban resulted in the release of 576 boys and their enrollment in reintegration programs. **The Working Group should**:

- Strongly **condemn all continuing violations and abuses committed against children** in Afghanistan, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL;**
- **Express deep concern about the grave violations being committed in the context of the Afghanistan-Pakistan cross-border tensions and hostilities** and their impact on children; **call on Pakistan armed forces to put in place measures that protect children;**
- **Demand that all parties allow full, rapid, safe, and unhindered humanitarian access in full compliance with international law for all humanitarian personnel**, including women, for UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and for other humanitarian actors, urge the Taliban to revoke the ban on women working for international and national NGOs and the UN and to **allow women and girls safe access to humanitarian assistance and basic services**;
- Urge the Taliban to **ensure that the prohibition of child recruitment and use applies to every human being below the age of 18 years**, and establish child protection units at recruitment centers and to develop standardized age assessment guidelines;
- Call on the Taliban 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;
- Urge the Taliban to **lift the suspension of girls' secondary and tertiary education** and **reopen all schools beyond the sixth grade for all girls**;
- **Call for allocation of sufficient resources to the UN Country Team to strengthen capacities to deliver on its child protection mandate**, including for monitoring and engagement with parties to end and prevent grave violations, and to **address threats posed by landmines, explosive remnants of war, and improvised explosive devices**.

Presidency of the Security Council for November: Latvia

Party to the 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, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention No. 182. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments and the Vancouver Principles. Has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, West Bank: Impact of Israeli settler attacks on education doubles this school year, October 26, 2026

Amnesty International, Sudan: El Fasher civilians suffer unlawful killings, detention and torture one year after city's capture by the RSF – new testimony, October 23, 2026

Human Rights Watch, War's Hidden Mental Health Toll on Children with Disabilities, October 8, 2026

Plan International, Gaza: The broken promises of a ceasefire, October 7, 2026

Save the Children, "Behind every alert is real fear for children" - Ukraine air raid alarms surge by over a quarter in three months as child casualties rise, October 1, 2026