

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

**Monthly Update:
March 2026**

AFGHANISTAN

In his 2025 annual report ([S/2025/247](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC), the Secretary-General (SG) continued to list Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-KP), and Taliban forces and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani network, for multiple grave violations against children. According to UNAMA's [report](#) on cross-border civilian casualties in Afghanistan from October to December 2025, Pakistan's continued attacks resulted in at least 15 civilians killed and 13 injured, children made up over half of those figures. The report highlights a significant escalation in civilian harm attributed to Pakistani military forces, noting that civilian casualties recorded between 1 October and 31 December 2025 exceeded the annual totals documented from cross-border clashes since 2011. Additionally, UNAMA's recent [statement](#) noted that preliminary civilian casualty figures indicate at least 13 civilians were killed and seven others injured, including children, as a result of overnight airstrikes on February 21-22 carried out by Pakistan inside Afghanistan. UNICEF continues to identify [explosive ordnance](#) as a significant danger to children, with UNMAS reporting approximately [70 percent](#) of casualties from explosive remnants of war (ERW) in Afghanistan in 2025 were children. In March, the UNAMA mandate is up for renewal per SCR 2777 (2025). **The Security Council should:**

- Call on all parties to **immediately cease hostilities and uphold their obligations under international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease the use of explosive ordnance and encourage the government to scale up demining and explosive ordnance risk education**;
- 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;
- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks on schools and education personnel, and prohibit the military use of schools** through, inter alia, legislation or military doctrine, and ensuring full, inclusive and non-discriminatory access to education for girls, refugee and internally displaced children, and children with disabilities;
- 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**;
- **Renew UNAMA's child protection mandate and ensure allocation of sufficient resources to strengthen capacities to deliver on this mandate**, including for monitoring and engagement with parties to end and prevent grave violations.

CHINA IS THE SECURITY COUNCIL PENHOLDERS ON AFGHANISTAN.

COLOMBIA

In his 2025 annual report on CAAC, the SG newly listed the Clan del Golfo (also known as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia), alongside the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups, all for the recruitment and use of children. According to the latest [report](#) of the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia, the Secretary-General reiterated that the recruitment and use of children by armed groups remained a major concern. The report also noted the killing of at least seven children, including four girls and three boys during a military airstrike including children who had reportedly been forcibly recruited. In March, the SG will report on the Verification Mission in Colombia. **The Security Council should:**

- **Demand that all parties uphold their obligations under international law, including IHL and IHRL**, including respecting the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution;
- Demand that all armed groups **immediately release all children under 18 from their ranks and prevent and end all child recruitment and use, the killing and maiming of children, their abductions, as well as take concrete steps to end rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including in the context of recruitment and use;

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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WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

COLOMBIA (Con't)

- Call on the Government to continue **strengthening efforts to prevent the recruitment and use of children**, as well as other grave violations, and to sustain and improve reintegration services, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable, including girls, Indigenous children, and children of African descent, while noting the heightened risk of recruitment at informal border crossings;
- Call on all armed groups to immediately **cease the use of explosive ordnance** including land mines near schools and **encourage the government to scale up demining and explosive ordnance risk education**;
- Call on all parties to **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children;
- Call on armed groups to **engage constructively with the United Nations by adopting action plans** to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

THE UNITED KINGDOM IS THE SECURITY COUNCIL PENHOLDER ON COLOMBIA.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Seventeen non-State armed groups (NSAGs) and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2025 annual report on CAAC for committing grave violations against children. The SG newly listed Mai-Mai Kashumba for recruitment and use and added this violation to the existing listings of CODECO and Mai-Mai Zaïre. According to the latest United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) report covering the period from 19 September to 1 December 2025, MONUSCO **verified** 133 grave violations affecting 125 children, including 120 boys and 5 girls. MONUSCO documented incidents resulting in 274 civilian deaths, including 72 children, and attacks and military operations in North Kivu that alone resulted in the deaths of 56 children. In addition, UNICEF **reported** more than 35,000 cases of sexual violence against children during the first nine months of 2025, following nearly 45,000 cases in 2024. In March, the SG will report on MONUSCO per SCR 2808 (2025). **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all continuing violations and abuses committed against children** in the DRC, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Call on all parties to engage with the UN to **develop and implement concrete commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children**; including action plans where relevant;
- 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 timely, 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;
- Call on all parties to **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children;
- Reiterate the crucial role of Child Protection Advisers in MONUSCO and **demand that the Mission continues to ensure the effectiveness of the MRM**, and call for **responsible transfer of child protection responsibilities to the UN Country Team**, including those related to the MRM, in the context of MONUSCO transition, consistent with SCR 2764 (2024).

FRANCE IS THE SECURITY COUNCIL PENHOLDER ON DRC.

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.

Presidency of the Security Council for March: 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 endorsed the Safe Schools Deceleration. Has not endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments nor the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

Plan International, [Plan urges action on Sudan's deepening humanitarian crisis](#), February 19, 2026

Save the Children, [Closure of Syria's Al-Hol camp Leaves Thousands of Children at Risk and Facing Uncertain Futures](#), February 19

International Crisis Group, [Kids on the Front Lines: Stopping Child Recruitment in Colombia](#), February 12, 2026

Save the Children, [Children recruited into armed groups in DR Congo describe abduction, drugging and violence as call for greater action](#), February 12, 2026

Save the Children, [Urgent medical evacuations through Rafah predicted to take over four years, trapping children in need](#), February 12, 2026

International Rescue Committee, [Increasing forced returns and political instability put millions at risk as Haiti's security unravels](#), February 11, 2026