

# Children and Armed Conflict

## Recommendations to the Security Council

### OPEN DEBATE ON THE PROTECTION OF CIVILIANS IN ARMED CONFLICT (POC)

In May, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on the PoC. **The Security Council and other UN Member States should:**

- Express political support and allocate adequate resources to UN missions to deliver on protection mandates, including dedicated child protection capacity; ensure that protection (PoC, conflict-related sexual violence, and child protection) knowledge, data, and capacity are preserved during mission transitions or drawdown;
- Call on the Secretary-General (SG) to ensure a credible, evidence-based list of perpetrators of grave violations in the annexes of his annual report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), and consistently applying standards to all perpetrators across all conflicts;
- Pursue accountability for violations of international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL) and consistently support international, independent investigative mechanisms in situations of armed conflict with significant civilian casualties, ensuring adequate child rights expertise is included in such mechanisms, and that reports from these mechanisms are made public;
- Call on parties to conflict, including Member States, to avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and to protect civilians and civilian objects indispensable to their survival.

### MYANMAR

In his 2025 annual report ([S/2025/247](#)) on CAAC, SG continued to list the Myanmar armed forces, including related forces and affiliated militias, for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abduction. The SG also listed seven non-State armed groups for recruitment and use of children. In 2024, the UN verified 2,138 grave violations against 1,762 children, including 1,248 boys, 499 girls and 15 of unknown sex, in addition to 121 violations that occurred in previous years. Killing and maiming was the most prevalent violation, affecting 1,261 children, with most casualties caused by explosive ordnance. The UN verified 482 cases of recruitment and use, 85 abductions, 133 attacks on schools and hospitals, and the military use of 59 schools and six hospitals. The UN also verified 175 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, mostly attributed to the Tatmadaw, including related forces and affiliated militias. According to the Annual [update](#) on the Human Rights Situation in Myanmar, airstrikes were the leading cause of civilian casualties in 2025, with deaths rising 52 percent compared to 2024, from 641 to 982, including 232 children. **The Security Council should:**

- **Strongly condemn all ongoing grave violations of children's rights** in Myanmar, call for perpetrators to be held accountable, and demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Urge all parties to prioritize the **funding and promotion of mine clearance and age-appropriate explosive ordnance risk education, conflict preparedness, and protection for affected communities**;
- Call on the Tatmadaw to continue implementing the 2012 joint action plan on non-recruitment of children, to **immediately end the recruitment and use of children including in non-combat roles and engage with the UN regarding the other violations, including killing and maiming and sexual violence**, and urge all listed parties to **sign and implement joint action plans with the UN to end and prevent grave violations**;
- **Call for an immediate cessation of attacks on schools, health facilities, and protected personnel**, and **urge the Tatmadaw to end all military use of schools and hospitals** and to ensure that attacks on these facilities and their related protected personnel are investigated and that perpetrators are duly prosecuted;
- Reiterate calls for **safe and unimpeded access for the delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all civilians in need, including children.

### Monthly Update: May 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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## 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. According to [UNICEF](#), explosive remnants of war continue to pose a disproportionate threat to children. Between December 2024 and February 2026, at least 1,891 civilian casualties were recorded due to explosive remnants of war, with children accounting for 30 per cent of those killed and 40 per cent of those injured. An estimated five million children live in areas contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war, placing them at constant risk. Additionally, the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSR CAAC) [raised](#) serious concerns over the continued detention of children in northeastern Syria for their or their family members' alleged association with Da'esh, emphasizing that they should be treated primarily as victims. She also expressed concern over the transfer of more than 150 children, as well as an undetermined number who reached adulthood in detention, from Syria to Iraq between January and February 2026, reportedly alongside adult detainees. **The Security Council should:**

- Encourage the Syrian government to **continue to engage with the UN to develop and adopt an action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use, the killing and maiming of children and to prevent all grave violations;**
- 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; 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 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](#);
- Urge Member States to **facilitate the safe and voluntary 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;
- **Allocate sufficient resources to strengthen local capacities to cope with the threats posed by explosive ordnance, including by scaling up mine clearance and age-appropriate explosive ordnance risk education;**
- **Call on the Syrian Government to endorse and implement the Paris Principles, the Safe School Declaration, the Vancouver Principles, and the EWIPA Declaration** to strengthen their national child protection frameworks.

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

## Presidency of the Security Council for May: 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

Human Rights Watch, [Was the Attack on an Iranian Primary School a War Crime?](#), April 20, 2026

War Child, [Three Years After War Began, What Comes Next for Sudan's Children?](#), April 20, 2026

Plan International, [Overnight strikes across Ukraine further endanger children and communities](#), April 16, 2026

Save the Children, [DRC: Number of attacks on schools triple in one year as violence escalates](#), April 16, 2026

World Vision, [No safe place: Children in Lebanon face rising protection risks amid expanding hostilities](#), April 9, 2026

Save the Children, [Camels carry mine awareness in Afghanistan where nearly one child killed or injured on average a day by explosives](#), April 4, 2026

Save the Children, [Almost 1,200 children killed or injured in Yemen due to conflict despite truce](#), April 1, 2026