

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

SYRIA

In his 2026 annual report ([S/2026/357](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC), the Secretary-General (SG), listed the Syrian government forces, including the former opposition Syrian National Army for killing and maiming and recruiting and using children, the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) for recruiting and using children, and Da'esh for all grave violations. In 2025, the United Nations (UN) verified 1,374 grave violations against children in Syria, including 988 children killed or maimed, 254 children recruited or used, rape and other forms of sexual violence against four children, 45 attacks on schools and hospitals, the abduction of 52 children, and 31 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. The UN also verified the military use of 40 schools and hospitals and the detention of 91 children. As of December 2025, approximately 16,100 children, including 5,400 foreign children, remained deprived of liberty for alleged association with armed groups, mainly Da'esh, in Hawl and Rawj camps. The SG noted that most grave violations attributed to Syrian government forces occurred before the formal establishment of the current Government on March 29, 2025, but expressed concern about the integration of members of listed parties without information on how past violations would be addressed.

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 and killing and maiming of children and to prevent all grave violations**;
- Reiterate that all **children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups (CAAFAG) 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 PENHOLDERS ON HUMANITARIAN ISSUES IN SYRIA.

UKRAINE

In the annexes of his 2026 annual report on CAAC, the SG continued to list the Russian armed forces for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals. In 2025, the UN verified 1,899 grave violations against 781 children in Ukraine, including the killing and maiming of 753 children (94 killed; 659 maimed), attributed to Russian armed forces (511), unidentified perpetrators (230), and Ukrainian armed forces (12). Most child casualties resulted from explosive weapons with wide-area effects. The UN also verified the use of 24 children as informants or to carry out other conflict-related activities. Russian armed forces perpetrated eight violations of rape and other forms of sexual violence against four girls. Russian armed forces also accounted for 469 of the 641 verified attacks on schools and hospitals, compared with 165 attributed to unidentified perpetrators and seven to Ukrainian armed forces. The UN further verified 473 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including 429 attacks on energy infrastructure, and the detention of 35 children. The SG welcomed the reported return and reintegration of more than 740 Ukrainian children but remained gravely concerned about transferred or deported children whose whereabouts remained unknown. **The Security Council Should:**

- **Demand that all parties uphold their obligations under International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and International Humanitarian Law (IHRL)**; and call on all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**;

Monthly Update: August 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

For resolution language on
Children and Armed Conflict,
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Armed Conflict smartphone
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Liechtenstein, and
Switzerland, available on
iPhone, iPad, Android, and
the web!

- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, and 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);
- Urge the Russian armed forces to **develop, sign, and implement an action plan with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children**;
- Call on Ukraine to **continue to fully implement** and update the joint prevention plan that is up for renewal in August 2026; Urge Ukraine to **reverse its decision to suspend the operation of the Ottawa Convention**;
- 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**; Urge Russia to **ensure that no changes are made to the legal status, including nationality and family relationships, of Ukrainian children, including children born in territories of Ukraine temporarily occupied by the Russian Federation**.

THERE IS NO DESIGNATED SECURITY COUNCIL PENHOLDER ON UKRAINE.

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. In 2025, the UN verified 742 grave violations against 652 children in Yemen, including the killing and maiming of 431 children (150 killed; 281 maimed). In 2025, the UN verified 742 grave violations against children in Yemen, including the killing and maiming of 431 children (150 children killed; 281 maimed). United States-authorized air strikes against Houthi targets resulted in 57 child casualties, while Israeli armed forces were responsible for 45. Many casualties resulted from explosive weapons and air strikes or drone attacks. The UN also verified the recruitment and use of 262 children by the Yemen Armed Forces and affiliated forces and groups (135) and the Houthis (127), with most children serving in combat roles. The SG had delisted the Yemen Armed Forces for this violation in 2022. Of those recruited and used, 52 boys were killed or maimed, while armed forces or groups released 115 children. The UN also received reports that the Houthis organized “summer camps” that exposed thousands of children to military content and activities. The UN further verified the rape of 12 children, 10 attacks on schools and hospitals, the military use of 71 schools and hospitals, and 27 incidents of denial of humanitarian access. The killing of senior Houthi de facto officials in August 2025 was followed by unprecedented restrictions on humanitarian operations, including additional arbitrary detentions of aid workers and UN personnel and seizures of UN facilities.

The Security Council Should:

- Express grave concern at the increase in the overall number of grave violations against children, and **demand that all parties uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**;
- Demand that all parties immediately **release all children under 18 from their ranks and prevent and end all child recruitment and use**;
- 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 the swift operationalization of the complaints mechanism;
- Call on the Houthi’s to **fully and swiftly implement the 2022 action plan and 2020 handover protocol**, in close collaboration with the UN, notably to 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, and demand that all parties allow and facilitate the **immediate, safe, and unimpeded delivery of humanitarian aid to children and other civilians in need**.

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.

Presidency of the Security Council for August: Denmark

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, the Rome Statute of the ICC, and ILO Convention 182. Has endorsed the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Safe Schools Declaration, and the Vancouver Principles.

NGO RESOURCES

War Child, [“Children shouldn’t have to think about survival”: 1,000 days of war in the West Bank](#), July 22, 2026

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Colombia: Armed groups’ attacks on education affect over 12,000 students and teachers](#), July 21, 2026

Amnesty International, [Lebanon: Israeli attacks killing children, wiping out families must be investigated as war crimes](#), July 9, 2026

Save the Children, [Sudan: More than 5,500 children displaced by escalating violence in El Obeid in past two weeks](#), July 7, 2026

Plan International, [1000 days of war: Gaza’s children continue to pay heaviest price](#), July 3, 2026

Amnesty International, [Sudan: City Under Siege, Children Under Fire: Rapid Support Forces’ Crimes Against Humanity in North Darfur](#), July 1, 2026