

Children and Armed Conflict:

SECURITY COUNCIL OPEN DEBATE ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

SPECIAL UPDATE:
MARCH 2015

Recommendations for the Security Council

On Wednesday 25th March, the UN Security Council (UNSC) will hold an Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), which will take place under the presidency of France. The theme of the Open Debate will focus on child victims of non-state armed actors (ANSAs). This will be the first Open Debate to focus on actions and tools Member States may constructively use to end and prevent grave violations against children by ANSAs. In June 2015, Malaysia, the current Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC), will host the second Open Debate on CAAC following the publication of the UN Secretary-General's 14th annual report on children and armed conflict ("annual report").

The March Open Debate on CAAC marks one year since the launch of the campaign, "Children, Not Soldiers." While the campaign succeeded in mobilizing high-level political engagement in support of its aim to end recruitment and use by government security forces by 2016, it only targets seven governments. The vast majority of parties listed in the latest annual report, 51 out of 59, are ANSAs operating in 15 situations of armed conflict. Of these, 25 ANSAs have been listed for at least five years and are therefore considered persistent perpetrators. In addition to recruitment and use, ANSAs perpetrate other violations. In 2014, the international community condemned abductions of children and attacks or threats of attacks on schools, as well as students and teachers.

Bearing in mind the variety of ANSAs, the Security Council must use the appropriate actions and tools for ending and preventing violations of children's rights by armed groups. Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict ("Watchlist") recommends the UNSC and Member States to call for the following:

(1) Facilitate the opportunity for ANSAs to sign and implement action plans and/or other protective measures:

- Call on the Secretary-General and his Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) to ensure that ANSAs listed in the annexes of his annual report are formally made aware of the listing and the ensuing requirement to prepare concrete, time-bound action plans to halt violations; and that strategies are developed to ensure that listed ANSAs are aware of conclusions issued by the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict;
- Call on the Secretary-General and the SRSG-CAAC to develop strategies for outreach to ANSAs, promoting action plan adoption and implementation;
- Urge concerned governments to facilitate and support engagement of ANSAs by the SRSG-CAAC, UNICEF and/or specialized non-governmental organizations for the purposes of developing action plans and/or other protective measures to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals.

(2) Consider CAAC in the peacemaking process:

- In accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1261 (1999), 1314 (2000), 1399 (2001), 1460 (2003), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), and 2143 (2014), urge Member States, UN entities, regional bodies, and other parties concerned to ensure that child protection provisions, including ending and preventing all six grave violations against children, are integrated into all peace negotiations and peace agreements;
- Request the Secretary-General to develop UN guidance for mediators on addressing conflict-related violations perpetrated against children in ceasefire and peace agreements;
- Encourage third-party negotiators to mobilize ANSAs in support of action plan adoption and implementation.

Situations before the Council involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

[Afghanistan](#)

[Central African Region \(LRA-affected areas\)](#)

[Central African Republic](#)

[Colombia](#)

[Democratic Republic of the Congo](#)

[Iraq](#)

[Mali](#)

[Myanmar \(Burma\)](#)

[Nigeria](#)

[Philippines](#)

[Somalia](#)

[South Sudan](#)

[Sudan](#)

[Syrian Arab Republic](#)

[Yemen](#)

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(3) Expand the Security Council Resolution 1612 listing criteria to include abductions:

- Request the Secretary-General to include in the annexes to his reports on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage in abductions of children.

(4) Promote safe schools and end the military use of schools:

- In line with Security Council Resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2143 (2014), call on parties to armed conflict to immediately cease attacks and threats of attacks against schools, students and teachers and to refrain from actions that impede children's access to education, including the military use of schools;
- Building on Security Council Resolution 2143 (2014), urge all Member States and all parties to armed conflict, in particular all non-state armed actors, to adopt concrete measures to deter military use of schools during armed conflict, in accordance with the guidance outlined in the Draft Operational Strategy for the prevention of military use of schools contained in Annex V of the Guidance Note on Security Council Resolution 1998 (2011), and in the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict;
- Call on Member States to facilitate and support efforts aimed at disseminating and promoting the implementation of the Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict among ANSAs.

(5) Consider CAAC in UN-mandated peace and political missions:

- Establish a mandatory pre-deployment requirement for child protection training, to be complemented with in-theatre training, for all troop-contributing countries;
- Call on the Secretary-General to develop and implement a policy that prohibits government security forces listed in the annexes of his annual report from contributing troops and police to UN-mandated missions, until he has certified the full implementation of their action plan with the UN.

(6) Increase effectiveness of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict:

- In the context of its consideration of options for increasing pressure on persistent perpetrators, including ANSAs, as requested by Security Council Resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2068 (2012), carry out or request a review of the effectiveness of its use of the tools in the toolkit;
- Increase the range and frequency of the use of tools in the toolkit, and explore the use of targeted measures to address persistent perpetrators as per Security Council Resolutions 1539 (2004), 1612 (2005), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012), and 2143 (2014).

PRESIDENCY OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL FOR MARCH: FRANCE

- *Party to Geneva Convention IV, Additional Protocols I and II, Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocol, ILO Convention 182, and the Rome Statute of the ICC; Endorsed the Paris Commitments.*

About Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a global network of international human rights and humanitarian non-governmental organizations which strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts through local partnerships, reporting and advocacy.

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NGO Resources

- Geneva Call, *In Their Words: Perspectives of Armed Non-State Actors on the Protection of Children from the effects of Armed Conflict* (2010) 
- Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, *Guidelines to Protect Schools and Universities from Military Use During Armed Conflict* 
- International Peace Institute, *Engaging Non-State Armed Groups on the Protection of Children: Towards Strategic Complementarity* (April 2012) 
- Permanent Mission of Liechtenstein, *Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination, Watchlist, Report of the workshop, Children and Armed Conflict: How to deal with Persistent Perpetrators?* (March 2013) 
- Watchlist, *Discussion Paper: Action Plans to Prevent and End Violations Against Children* (April 2013) 
- Watchlist, *Briefing Note, A Checklist for Mainstreaming* (March 2013) 
- Watchlist, *Briefing Note, Working Methods 2006-2014* (March 2014) 
- Watchlist, *Who Will Care For Us? Grave Violations Against Children in Nigeria* (September 2014) 

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