

Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

Fifteen parties are listed for grave violations in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2020 annual report on children and armed conflict (CAAC), including the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In December, MONUSCO's mandate is up for renewal, pursuant to SCR 2502 (2019). The Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC) is currently negotiating its conclusions on children and armed conflict in the DRC. See below for targeted recommendations to the Working Group. **The Security Council should:**

- **Renew MONUSCO's child protection mandate**, preserving the Child Protection Unit's existing capacity, and ensuring the senior Child Protection Adviser (CPA) continues to have direct access to senior mission leadership and political and operational space to engage with all parties to conflict, including non-State armed groups; **maintain distinct budget lines for child protection**;
- Call on all parties to **facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to all children and other civilians in need, including by lifting any impediments that could delay, reduce, or prevent the delivery of assistance, without discrimination;
- **Ensure that the critical role of the Child Protection Unit is maintained during MONUSCO's drawdown**, and encourage the use of indicators on child protection, developed with meaningful participation of civil society stakeholders, to inform decision making on future child protection capacity in the Mission.

France is the lead on DRC. Niger chairs the 1533 Sanctions Committee.

SUDAN (DARFUR)

Four non-State armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2020 annual report on CAAC for recruitment and use of children. In December, UNAMID's mandate is set to expire, pursuant to SCR 2525 (2020). In June, the Council adopted SCR 2524 (2020), establishing the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) as a follow-on presence covering the whole of Sudan. In November, the SCWG-CAAC adopted its sixth [conclusions](#) on children and armed conflict in the Sudan. **The Security Council should:**

- Encourage the Government to continue efforts to improve humanitarian access, and call on non-State armed groups to **allow safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to children and other civilians in need;
- **Call for allocation of adequate resources** to allow UNITAMS to fully deliver on its child protection mandate, including monitoring and reporting on grave violations, per SCR 2524 (2020);
- Call on all parties to **swiftly and fully implement the recommendations of the SCWG-CAAC** elaborated in its sixth conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Sudan.

Germany and the United Kingdom are the lead countries on Sudan (Darfur).

Recommendations to the Working Group

In July, the Working Group received the SG's [second](#) report on children and armed conflict in **Nigeria**. For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's August 2020 CAAC Monthly Update](#). In August, the Working Group received the SG's [fifth](#) report on children and armed conflict in the **Philippines**. For targeted recommendations, see [Watchlist's October 2020 CAAC Monthly Update](#).

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC)

In November, the Working Group received the SG's seventh report ([S/2020/1030](#)) on children and armed conflict in the DRC, covering the period from January 2018 to March 2020. During this period, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified 9,957 grave violations, affecting 8,444 children (6,439 boys, 2,005 girls), including 4,639 children who were recruited before 2018 but separated in the reporting period. New cases of recruitment decreased, continuing a trend noted in the SG's previous report on the DRC ([S/2018/502](#)). Killings and maimings, abductions, and attacks on schools and hospitals also decreased, but sexual violence remained high (763 verified cases). Armed groups were found responsible for 95 percent of all verified violations. However, violations by Government security forces, in particular sexual violence (332) and killing and maiming (90), remain a concern. **The Working Group should:**

Monthly Update: December 2020

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Mali
Myanmar
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Yemen

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DRC (cont'd)

- Urge all listed parties to immediately cease recruiting and using children, release those within their ranks, and if they have not yet done so, engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**;
- Call on the Government to adhere to directives issued in 2013 by the Minister of Defense and the *Agence Nationale de Renseignement* (ANR) to **immediately hand over children formerly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors**;
- Strongly condemn persistently high numbers of rape and sexual violence, urge all parties to **take immediate and specific steps to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children**, including by ensuring perpetrators are held accountable and that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection; call on the Government to accelerate efforts to implement its action plan on sexual violence;
- Urge all parties to **immediately end attacks against schools, hospitals, and protected personnel**, and to uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL); call on the Government to swiftly and fully implement its commitments under the Safe Schools Declaration and to ensure that attacks on schools are investigated and that those responsible are duly prosecuted.

MALI

In November, the Working Group received the SG's third report (S/2020/1105) on children and armed conflict in Mali, covering the period from July 2017 to March 2020. During this period, the CTFMR verified 1,764 grave violations, affecting 1,092 children (251 girls, 811 boys, 30 of unknown gender). This number represents a sharp increase compared to the previous reporting period (740 violations impacting 507 children), with five out of six grave violations seeing a dramatic increase. Attacks on schools and hospitals tripled since the last reporting period, leading to the closure of over 1,260 schools and impacting the education of at least 378,300 children prior to the nationwide closure of schools due to COVID-19. Much of the rise in grave violations corresponded with an uptick in intercommunal violence and the presence of armed groups in central Mali. Three percent of violations were attributed to Government Forces, and 44 percent of violations were attributed to non-State armed groups. For the remaining verified violations, it was not possible to identify the perpetrator. **The Working Group should:**

- Express grave concern at the increase in grave violations against children, and call on all parties to uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL; **call for perpetrators to be held accountable**, in particular for sexual violence against children;
- Call on the Government to **ensure continued and full implementation of its 2013 Protocol on the Release and Handover of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups**, including for children allegedly associated with armed groups designated as terrorist, recalling that children should be treated primarily as victims and prioritizing their reintegration as guided by the Paris Principles;
- Expressing concern at children verified to be associated with the Malian Armed Forces (FAMA), urge the Government to **reinforce effective age assessment procedures, to continue cooperating with the CTFMR on screening for and ensuring the swift release of associated children** in disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) and integration processes, and to finalize the revision of the draft child protection law criminalizing child recruitment and use;
- Call on the Government to continue to take steps to fully implement the Safe Schools Declaration and the Guidelines for Protecting Schools from Military Use, and to **ensure that attacks on schools and related protected personnel are investigated** and that those responsible are duly prosecuted;
- Welcome efforts to strengthen and accelerate implementation of the *Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad's* (CMA) 2017 action plan, urge the Platform to sign and implement its draft action plan, and call on parties to conflict who have not yet done so to engage with the UN to **develop, sign, and implement action plans to end and prevent grave violations**;
- Encourage ongoing efforts to **mainstream children's rights into the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission and to facilitate children's safe participation** in the reconciliation process, and call for the specific needs of boys and girls to be taken into account in all DDR programs and justice and security reforms.

NGO RESOURCES

Save the Children, [Five Children Killed or Maimed in Afghanistan Every Day for the Past 14 Years](#), November 23, 2020

Save the Children, [Stop the War on Children – Killed and Maimed: A Generation of Violations Against Children in Conflict](#), November 20, 2020

Save the Children, [Yemen: Child Casualties Skyrocket in Hodeidah and Taiz as World Leaders Set to Meet](#), November 17, 2020

World Vision, [Breaking Point: COVID-19 and the Child Protection Crisis in Afghanistan](#), November 12, 2020

Norwegian Refugee Council, [Raided and Razed: Attacks on West Bank Education](#), November 12, 2020

Save the Children, [Not Immune: Children in Conflict](#), November 11, 2020

World Vision, [Act Now for Children: How a Global Pandemic is Changing the Lives of Children in Middle East and Eastern Europe Region](#), November 9, 2020

Presidency of the Security Council for December: South Africa

Party to Geneva Conventions I-IV, Additional Protocols I and 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 and the Safe Schools Declaration; has not endorsed the Vancouver Principles.