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Children and Armed Conflict

Recommendations to the Security Council

Monthly Update:
June 2024

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)

Local militias known as anti-balaka, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and the *Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC)*, *Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC)*, and *Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC)* as part of the former Séléka coalition, are all listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's (SG) 2023 annual report ([S/2023/363](#)) on children and armed conflict (CAAC) for various grave violations against children. In June, the SG is expected to report on the situation in CAR and MINUSCA, pursuant to SCR 2709 (2023). According to the SG's February report on MINUSCA ([S/2024/170](#)), the UN continued to verify grave violations against children in CAR between October 2023 and January 2024, primarily rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, and recruitment and use. The specific numbers of verified grave violations were not included in the report. However, armed groups, and particularly the *Coalition des patriotes pour le changement*, were found responsible for 64 percent of verified grave violations, and State actors and other security personnel were responsible for 16 percent. The Security Council Working Group on CAAC (SCWG-CAAC) is currently negotiating its latest conclusions in response to the SG's sixth report on CAR ([S/2024/93](#)). **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law (IHRL)**, and that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children;
- Call for all parties to **end and prevent grave violations against children**, including by engaging with the UN to sign and implement action plans to end and prevent all six grave violations against children; urge the MPC, FPRC, and UPC to **fully and swiftly implement their respective action plans** and release all children still in their ranks;
- Ensure allocation of **sufficient capacity in MINUSCA's child protection unit to fully deliver on its child protection mandate**, per SCR 2709 (2023);
- Call on the Government to **fully implement all aspects of the Child Protection Code and the national plan on the prevention of grave violations against children**, to continue working with the UN towards the **adoption of the draft handover protocol**, and to **ensure perpetrators of grave violations are held accountable** and that child survivors of sexual violence have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response systems and services, and strengthen preventive measures.

France is the Security Council penholder on CAR.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)

Fifteen non-State armed groups (NSAGs) are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2023 annual report on CAAC for various grave violations against children, and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) are listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In June, the SG is expected to report on MONUSCO, pursuant to SCR 2717 (2023). According to the SG's March MONUSCO report ([S/2024/251](#)), the UN verified 763 grave violations against 646 children between December 2023 and February 2024. Among those, 446 children were recruited and used (320 boys and 126 girls). Elements of Raia Mutomboki were responsible for the largest number of verified grave violations (325), followed by M23 (109), ADF (80), Nyatura (48), and 18 other non-State armed groups (193). The Congolese security forces were found responsible for seven (7) grave violations, including killing, sexual violence, abduction, and an attack on a hospital. UNICEF Deputy Executive Director for Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations recently [expressed](#) concern at the scale of the conflict in eastern DRC and its impact on children, stating that verified grave violations were "the highest ever." Grave violations in the first quarter of 2024 saw a 30 percent increase from the fourth quarter of 2023, with over [1000](#) grave violations verified between January and March. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, and call for all armed groups to **immediately cease recruiting, using, and abducting children, release those within their ranks**, and, if they have not yet done so, engage with the UN to **develop and implement concrete commitments to end and prevent grave violations against children**; including action plans where relevant;

Situations involving parties listed for grave violations against children:

Afghanistan
Burkina Faso
Central African Republic
Colombia
Democratic Republic of Congo
Iraq
Lake Chad Basin
Mali
Myanmar
Philippines
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Syria
Ukraine
Yemen

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WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

DRC (con't)

- Call on all parties to **immediately cease attacks and threats of attack on educational and health facilities and personnel**, as well as to refrain from the military use of schools, and to **allow and facilitate the safe, unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance** to affected populations, especially children, and respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure;
- Encourage the Government to **continue its cooperation with the UN on screening and age verification to prevent the recruitment of children**, call for age verification to be implemented at the territorial level, and encourage continued efforts to **hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable**;
- Call on all parties to take immediate and specific steps to end and prevent rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, including by ensuring that survivors have access to comprehensive, gender-sensitive, and age-appropriate response and protection, and call on the Government to **accelerate efforts to implement aspects of its 2012 action plan relating to sexual violence** and the Joint Communiqué signed with the UN to fight sexual violence in conflict.

France is the Security Council penholder on DRC.

SUDAN

Five armed groups are listed in the annexes of the SG's 2023 annual report on CAAC for the recruitment and use of children in Sudan. In June, the SG is expected to report on UN efforts to support Sudan, pursuant to SCR 2715 (2023). According to the SG's February report ([S/2024/204](#)), the UN verified 115 grave violations against 102 children, including killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and recruitment and use. UNICEF has [warned](#) that the war is "pushing the country towards famine and a catastrophic loss of children's lives," and Sudan remains the largest child displacement crisis globally with over 4.6 million children displaced since April 2023. Violent attacks on schools and education in Sudan increased [fourfold](#) since April 2023. Fighting in El Fasher has raised alarms for the civilian population, including [children](#), with the [SG](#) calling for respect for international law, humanitarian access, and allowing civilians to move to safer areas. **The Security Council should:**

- Demand that all parties **uphold their obligations under IHL and IHRL**, taking all necessary precautions to protect civilians and civilian objects, including schools and hospitals, in accordance with the principles of precaution, distinction, and proportionality; and adopt concrete measures to end and prevent grave violations against children;
- Condemn all attacks on humanitarian actors, civilians, especially children, and civilian infrastructure, and call on all parties to **avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas**;
- **Reiterate calls for an immediate ceasefire** with clearly articulated timeframes, coordination with relevant regional and subregional organizations and humanitarian actors to establish such a ceasefire, as well as to prevent further violations and abuses against civilians, including children;
- Demand that all parties **allow and facilitate the safe, timely, and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance to affected populations**, especially children; and respect and protect humanitarian personnel, assets, and infrastructure; and allow civilians safe passage out of conflict zones;
- Explore credible civilian protection options for Sudan, in collaboration with the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development; and request the SG to strengthen the Protection of Civilians mandate of his Personal Envoy, ensuring sufficient resources to fulfill such a mandate.

The United Kingdom is the Security Council penholder on Sudan.

Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict

On June 26, the Security Council will hold its annual open debate on CAAC. For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Special Update June 2024 (forthcoming).

Recommendations to the Working Group

The Working Group has not yet adopted conclusions in response to the following reports of the SG on children and armed conflict: Myanmar ([S/2020/1243](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)), Syria ([S/2023/805](#)), Central African Republic ([S/2024/93](#)), Colombia ([S/2024/161](#)), and Iraq ([S/2024/247](#)). For targeted recommendations, see Watchlist's Monthly CAAC updates from [February 2021](#), [July 2022](#), [December 2023](#), [April 2024](#), and [May 2024](#), respectively.

Presidency of the Security Council for June: Republic of Korea

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 and the Vancouver Principles; has not endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration.

NGO RESOURCES

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, et al., [Open Letter by 22 NGOs Calling for a Complete and Accurate List of Perpetrators](#), May 30, 2024

Save the Children, [At Least 66 People Killed Including Children in Four Days of Attacks on "Safe Zones" in Rafah](#), May 29, 2024

Insecurity Insight, Safeguarding Health in Conflict Coalition, [Critical Condition: Violence Against Health Care in Conflict 2023](#), May 22, 2024

[2024 Statement by Members of the NGO Working Group on the Protection of Civilians](#), May 15, 2024

Human Rights Watch, [Mozambique: Child Soldiers Used in Raid on Northern Town](#), May 15, 2024

Human Rights Watch, ["The Massalit Will Not Come Home," Ethnic Cleansing and Crimes Against Humanity in El Geneina, West Darfur, Sudan](#), May 9, 2024

Save the Children, [Extreme Hunger in Haiti Forcing Children into Armed Gangs](#), May 8, 2024