

**Security Council**

Distr.: General
31 December 2023

Original: English

**Letter dated 22 December 2023 from the Chair of the
Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed
Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, containing an account of the Working Group's activities from 1 January to 31 December 2023. The report, which was approved by the Working Group, is being submitted in accordance with the note by the President of the Security Council of 29 March 1995 ([S/1995/234](#)).

I should be grateful if the present letter and the report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Vanessa **Frazier**
Chair

Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict



Report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

I. Introduction

1. The present report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict covers the period from 1 January to 31 December 2023.
2. The Bureau of the Working Group consisted of Vanessa Frazier (Malta) as Chair and a representative of Ecuador as Vice-Chair.

II. Background

3. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) on children and armed conflict. In paragraph 8 of that resolution, the Council decided to establish a working group to review the reports of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans to halt recruitment and use of children in violation of international obligations and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council also decided that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support the implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

4. On 2 May 2006, the Working Group adopted its terms of reference, which were subsequently published as a document of the Security Council ([S/AC.51/2007/1](#)). On 8 September 2006, the Working Group adopted a list of options for possible actions, which is referred to as the “toolkit” ([S/AC.51/2007/2](#)).

5. Pursuant to resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#), the Chair of the Working Group has submitted periodic reports to the Security Council on developments in relation to the Working Group since 2006.

6. On 9 July 2018, the Security Council unanimously adopted resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), which provided a comprehensive framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and the empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle and emphasized the importance of the children and armed conflict agenda to conflict prevention and peacekeeping.

7. Further background information on the Working Group can be found in the previous annual reports of the Working Group.

III. Summary of the activities of the Working Group

8. During the reporting period, the Working Group held nine formal meetings, on 23 February, 31 March, 8 June, 19 July, 6 and 29 September, 13 and 30 November and 20 December, and held six informal consultations, on 3, 11 and 23 May, 29 June, 27 November and 8 December, in addition to conducting its work through written procedures.

9. At its 106th meeting, held on 23 February, a representative of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from July to September 2022. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on her field visits to Colombia, Israel and the State of Palestine.
10. At its 107th meeting, held on 31 March, the Working Group examined the fourth report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Mali ([S/2022/856](#)), which covers the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and its main conclusions, after which a representative of Mali presented the views of the Government of Mali on the report. At the same meeting, the Working Group discussed the fourth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in South Sudan ([S/2023/99](#)), which covers the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2022. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and its main conclusions. A representative of South Sudan presented the views of the Government of South Sudan on the report.
11. At its 108th meeting, held on 8 June, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from October to December 2022. At the same meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict provided a briefing to the Working Group on her field visits to Ethiopia, Mozambique, Qatar, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.
12. At its 109th meeting, held on 19 July, the Working Group adopted conclusions on children and armed conflict in South Sudan ([S/AC.51/2023/1](#)). The Chair of the Working Group also provided a briefing on the field visit to Nigeria undertaken by the Working Group.
13. At its 110th meeting, held on 6 September, the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting of Somalia briefed the Working Group on the situation of children and armed conflict in Somalia. At the same meeting, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from January to March 2023.
14. At its 111th meeting, held on 29 September, the Working Group adopted conclusions on children and armed conflict in Nigeria ([S/AC.51/2023/2](#)).
15. At its 112th meeting, held on 13 November, the Working Group adopted conclusions on children and armed conflict in Mali, which will be published in the coming weeks. The Working Group discussed the fourth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic ([S/2023/805](#)), which covers the period from 1 July 2020 to 30 September 2022. A representative of the Syrian Arab Republic presented the views of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on the report. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and its main conclusions. At the same meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict provided a briefing to the Working Group on the situation of children and armed conflict in Israel and the State of Palestine.
16. At its 113th meeting, held on 30 November, the Co-Chairs of the country task force on monitoring and reporting of the Democratic Republic of the Congo briefed the Working Group on the situation of children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict provided a briefing to the Working Group on recent field visits to Jordan, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia and Yemen.

17. At its 114th meeting, held on 20 December, the Working Group discussed the sixth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Afghanistan ([S/2023/893](#)), which covers the period from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022. A representative of Afghanistan delivered a statement on the report. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and its main conclusions. At the same meeting, a representative of UNICEF presented the global horizontal note by the Secretary-General covering the period from April to June 2023. The Special Representative also briefed the Working Group on the African Union Ministerial and High-level Open Session on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights and Welfare of Children in Situations of Conflict in Africa, held in Banjul on 4 and 5 December.

18. Pursuant to the adoption of the aforementioned conclusions on South Sudan, Nigeria and Mali, the Working Group released three public statements as Security Council press releases, in relation to South Sudan ([SC/15360](#)) on 19 July, Nigeria ([SC/15429](#)) on 29 September and Mali ([SC/15488](#)) on 13 November.

19. In 2023, in direct relation to the conclusions that it had adopted, the Working Group sent 57 communications to 47 Member States and other stakeholders.

20. From 10 to 13 July, the Working Group visited Nigeria. The delegation was led by the Chair of the Working Group and Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, and included nine Security Council members: Brazil, France, Ghana, Malta, the Russian Federation, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. The goals of the visit were: (a) to review the progress made following the signing by Nigeria of the handover protocol for children encountered in the course of armed conflict in Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin and to encourage the Government to implement it fully; (b) to encourage the Government to implement fully the Safe Schools Declaration; (c) to engage directly with government officials and other stakeholders, including civil society, and assess how the Working Group can support durable and sustainable socioeconomic reintegration of children exiting from armed groups; and (d) to gain first-hand knowledge on the situation in the north-east and the challenges children face in the Hajj camp and the Bulumkutu interim care centre. The delegation visited Abuja and Maiduguri and met with senior government and United Nations officials. The delegation also met with the National Human Rights Commission, the Protection Sector Working Group (civil society), and the Humanitarian Coordination Team in Maiduguri. They further engaged with the Co-Chairs of the country task force for monitoring and reporting, the United Nations country team, UNICEF Abuja, as well as the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict in Nigeria and the North-East Ambassadors Group.

IV. Secretariat administrative and substantive support

21. The Security Council Affairs Division provided substantive and procedural support to the Chair and the members of the Working Group. Induction briefings were also provided to incoming members of the Council to familiarize them with the specific issues relevant to the Working Group.