



Security Council

Distr.: General
30 August 2024

Original: English

Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic

1. At its meeting on 12 April 2024, the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict of the Security Council examined the sixth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic ([S/2024/93](#)), covering the period between 1 July 2021 and 30 June 2023, which was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group (see annex).

2. The members of the Working Group expressed grave concern at the six grave violations committed against children in the Central African Republic. They expressed their particular concern about the high number of abuses committed against children by armed groups. They further condemned violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and noted that killing and maiming including by explosive ordnance, the increase in abductions of children, and incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence show the continued impact of the conflict on children. Members further expressed concern at the humanitarian situation and called upon all parties to the conflict to respect their obligations under international law and to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, and to act consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, and the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance. Members welcomed measures taken by the Government to protect children, including the development of a draft strategy for a national prevention plan, the appointment of a focal point at the headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and the increased prosecution of perpetrators. They further welcomed the continued release and reintegration of children associated with armed groups and armed forces and encouraged the Government to reinforce their efforts on the sustainable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children, as well as child-sensitive security sector reform. Members underscored that the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic was essential to achieving sustainable peace and development, and called for constructive support by the international community in this regard. The members further reiterated their support for the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on reporting on, and the protection of, children affected by armed conflict.



3. The members of the Working Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General. Further to the meeting, and subject to and consistent with applicable international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including resolutions [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#), [2427 \(2018\)](#) and [2601 \(2021\)](#), the Working Group agreed to the direct action set out below.

Public statement by the Chair of the Working Group

4. The Working Group agreed to address the following message to all parties to the armed conflict in the Central African Republic, through a public statement by its Chair:

(a) Expressing grave concern at and its strongest condemnation of the high number of violations and abuses committed against children in the Central African Republic, notably by armed groups, and urging all parties to the conflict, especially armed groups, to immediately end and prevent all abuses and violations against children including those involving the recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction and the denial of humanitarian access, and to comply with their obligations under international law;

(b) Welcoming the continued implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (hereafter “the Peace Agreement”), which entailed progress on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation efforts, community reconciliation and voluntary returns, and the joint road map for peace and its expansion to the local level; expressing concern that, despite encouraging steps, the security situation remained fragile, including due to the deterioration of the security situation in the border areas, and that violations and abuses continue to be committed against children; calling upon the signatories to the Peace Agreement to uphold their commitments, including its specific provisions to protect children; noting with concern that some armed groups who are signatories to the Peace Agreement continued to be among the main perpetrators of the six grave violations against children; and urging all parties to work with the United Nations to reinforce their efforts to end and prevent violations and abuses against children;

(c) Calling upon all parties to the armed conflict to further implement the previous conclusions of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict in the Central African Republic ([S/AC.51/2022/5](#));

(d) Expressing concern about the challenges faced by the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting in the Central African Republic, including as a result of, inter alia, activities by armed groups, an increase in the indiscriminate use of explosive ordnance, as well as fighters living within their communities, which hampered the ability of the country task force to safely monitor and report on the six grave violations; also expressing concern that, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General, the information contained in the report does not reflect the full extent of the six grave violations committed against children in the Central African Republic during the reporting period, and in this regard urging parties to the conflict to ensure United Nations personnel safe and unhindered access to territories under their control, including for advocacy and for monitoring and reporting purposes;

(e) Stressing the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses against children in armed conflict by all parties, and stressing that all those responsible be brought to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely, impartial and systematic investigations and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction; and underscoring that all victims and survivors must have access to justice, and that all children must have access to gender-sensitive, age-appropriate,

disability-inclusive, non-discriminatory and comprehensive child protection services; in this regard, welcoming the efforts of the domestic courts and the Special Criminal Court to advance accountability for the six grave violations against children;

(f) Stressing that the best interests of the child should be a primary consideration, and that the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls and boys should be duly considered, when planning and carrying out actions concerning children in situations of armed conflict, including by taking all preventive and mitigating actions necessary to avoid and minimize harm and to better protect children during hostilities and from the effects of explosive ordnance;

(g) Expressing deep concern about and condemnation of the high number of cases of recruitment and use of children, noting that armed groups were responsible for the majority of cases of recruitment and use; noting that children were used for sexual purposes, as well as in combat and support roles such as cooks, porters, running errands, gathering information and manning checkpoints; further noting that children joined armed groups to protect their communities or themselves, as a means of survival due to poverty, and due to fear of reprisals; strongly urging all parties to the armed conflict to engage with United Nations and to immediately and without conditions release all children from their ranks and hand them over to relevant civilian child protection actors; urging all parties to the conflict to end and prevent further recruitment and use of children under 18 years of age, consistent with their obligations under international law, including the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict; also noting in this regard the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and welcoming positive steps taken by the Government, including the signing of the action plan against the trafficking of children in the Central African Republic, with a focus on preventing the use of children by the Armed Forces;

(h) Expressing concern about the deprivation of liberty of children by parties to armed conflict for their alleged association with armed groups; urging all parties to the conflict to release those children and ensure their full reintegration through child protection programmes; emphasizing that children allegedly associated with parties to the conflict should be treated primarily as victims, including those children who are accused of having committed crimes, and that detention should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, in line with applicable international law; urging the Government of the Central African Republic to comply with its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Optional Protocol thereto on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and recalling that the Government has endorsed the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), and that alternatives to judicial proceedings should be sought for children; welcoming in this regard the release of 57 children who had been detained for their alleged association with armed groups following advocacy measures and a presidential decree granting them clemency on 2 December 2022, and calling upon parties to the conflict to engage with the United Nations to adopt and implement appropriate handover protocols to facilitate the release of children to civilian child protection actors and prioritize their reintegration;

(i) Encouraging the Government to continue to focus on long-term, sustainable and timely rehabilitation and reintegration programmes and opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive and inclusive for children with disabilities, including equal access to health care, psychosocial support and education programmes, as well as to raise awareness and work with communities to avoid the stigmatization of these children, facilitate their return and minimize the risk of re-recruitment, while taking into account the specific needs of children, in order to contribute to their well-being and to sustainable peace

and security; welcoming the operationalization of a vocational training centre for children in Ouaka prefecture; further welcoming the fact that the implementation of local mechanisms in response to security threats entailed progress on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation efforts, community reconciliation efforts and voluntary returns, while noting with concern that children's access to sustainable socioeconomic reintegration programmes was impaired by ongoing fighting, increases in logistical costs for humanitarian interventions and a decrease in funding for long-term reintegration programmes;

(j) Strongly condemning the killing and maiming of children, notably by armed groups, including during targeted killings as a result of gunshots, explosive ordnance, mutilation, physical assault, assault with a machete, shrapnel, burns and rape; expressing concern that during armed confrontation, Muslim and Fulani civilians, including children, were reportedly attacked and subjected to violations, and urging all parties to the conflict to cease and prevent the killing and maiming of children, including by refraining from the indiscriminate use of explosive weapons that cause death or injury to children and that destroy the vital infrastructure they rely on, noting that deliberately targeting civilian objects, as such, violates international humanitarian law;

(k) Expressing deep concern at cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against children, including gang rape and abduction for the purpose of sexual slavery; noting that cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence continue to be underreported owing to stigmatization, the risk of reprisals, a lack of accountability and the absence of adequate support services for victims and survivors; urging all parties to the conflict to take immediate and specific measures to put an end to and prevent the perpetration of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; and stressing the importance of providing non-discriminatory and comprehensive specialized services for victims and survivors of sexual violence, including mental health and psychosocial support, health, including sexual and reproductive health services, legal and livelihood support and services, including a child-friendly and safe reporting and response mechanism; acknowledging the increased accountability for sexual violence through the gradual operationalization of the military justice system and proceedings before domestic courts, the Special Criminal Court and other courts; noting with concern that the customary practice of "friendly arrangements" remained a challenge in addressing accountability for sexual violence and may result in further violations or abuses of children's rights, including child forced marriage;

(l) Welcoming the notable decrease in attacks on schools and hospitals, while continuing to strongly condemn attacks on schools and hospitals in violation of international law; calling upon all parties to the conflict to comply with international law and to respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals and to end and prevent attacks or threats of attacks against those institutions and protected persons in violation of applicable international law; expressing deep concern at the verified incidents of military use of schools and hospitals in violation of international law; and further calling upon all parties to the conflict to safeguard, protect, respect and promote the right to education, including in armed conflict;

(m) Strongly condemning the abduction of children and expressing grave concern at the increase in abductions of children, including for recruitment and use and sexual purposes, for ransom and as retaliation, noting that most cases were attributed to armed groups, and calling upon all parties to the conflict to cease the abduction of children and immediately release all abducted children to the relevant civilian child protection actors;

(n) Strongly condemning the incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including injury, abduction, physical assault, killing, threats and robbing of humanitarian personnel, extortion, the collection of levies by armed groups, access denial, the destruction of humanitarian goods and explosive ordnance attacks; noting that a majority of the incidents were committed by armed groups and unidentified perpetrators; further expressing concern at the level of insecurity, which regularly prevented the humanitarian community from delivering vital assistance to communities in need, and calling upon all parties to the conflict to allow and facilitate, in line with international law, including international humanitarian law, safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access, consistent with the humanitarian principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality and independence, as well as the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, and to respect the exclusively humanitarian nature and impartiality of humanitarian aid and to respect the work of all United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners without adverse distinction;

(o) Welcoming the dialogue between the United Nations and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)-Achaye on the release of abducted children; urging the faction to end and prevent all violations and abuses and release all abducted children and to refrain from seeking to recapture released children; welcoming the adoption of a command directive prohibiting grave violations against children by the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC), and urging CPC to implement this command directive; further calling upon the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC), the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) to swiftly implement their respective action plans; and urging all parties to the conflict to develop, adopt and implement action plans with the United Nations to end and prevent all six grave violations against children affected by armed conflict;

(p) Recalling the Security Council's readiness to adopt targeted and graduated measures against persistent perpetrators of violations and abuses committed against children, and that the Security Council, by its resolution [2693 \(2023\)](#), renewed until 31 July 2024 the asset freeze and travel ban measures imposed by resolutions [2127 \(2013\)](#), [2134 \(2014\)](#) and [2399 \(2018\)](#), which apply to individuals and entities as designated by the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [2745 \(2024\)](#), for actions that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Central African Republic, such as:

(i) Being involved in planning, directing or committing acts that violate international human rights law or international humanitarian law, as applicable, or that constitute human rights abuses or violations in the Central African Republic, including acts involving sexual violence, targeting of civilians, ethnic or religious-based attacks, deliberate attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction and forced displacement;

(ii) Recruiting or using children in armed conflict in the Central African Republic, in violation of applicable international law;

(iii) Obstructing the delivery of humanitarian assistance to the Central African Republic, or access to or distribution of, humanitarian assistance in the Central African Republic;

(q) Expressing the readiness of the Working Group to communicate to the Security Council pertinent information with a view to assisting the Council in the imposition of targeted measures on perpetrators;

To all United Nations peacekeeping operations, including the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic and non-United Nations forces present in the Central African Republic and relevant Member States

(r) Expressing deep distress over continued concerns regarding sexual exploitation and abuse against children by some United Nations peacekeepers, and strongly condemning all acts of sexual exploitation and abuse;

(s) Calling upon the United Nations and relevant Member States to continue to take appropriate action to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including the vetting of all personnel and conducting predeployment and in-mission awareness training, to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct, including through timely survivor-centred investigations of all allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse; to hold perpetrators accountable and repatriate units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units; to take appropriate disciplinary measures; to report fully and promptly on actions undertaken; to ensure that child victims and witnesses are adequately protected during the investigation process; and to facilitate access to medical and psychological support, as appropriate; and in that respect welcoming the appointment and the work of the Field Victims' Rights Advocate by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the adoption of a victim-centred approach, enabling most child victims to access services and education/vocation training;

(t) Urging further efforts by relevant Member States to take appropriate preventative action, including the vetting of all personnel and the delivery of robust predeployment training concerning sexual exploitation and abuse in accordance with the terms of their memorandums of understanding and other agreements with the United Nations;

To neighbouring States, United Nations bodies, regional organizations and all international partners

(u) Encouraging neighbouring States, regional organizations and all international partners to support the peace process, including to end and prevent violations and abuses against children, in a coherent and coordinated manner and through strengthened partnerships; noting that the long-awaited local elections provide an essential opportunity to strengthen local governance and to decentralize the peace process; welcoming the second strategic review meeting to take stock of progress in the implementation of the Peace Agreement with members of the Government as well as regional and international partners, including the guarantors and facilitators of the Political Agreement and the Foreign Ministers of Angola and Rwanda, and emphasizing the important role of those guarantors and facilitators of the Peace Agreement in using their influence to enhance adherence by armed groups to their commitments; and welcoming the adoption of the joint road map for peace by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, known as the Luanda road map;

(v) Calling upon the international community, and MINUSCA, in conformity with its mandate, the United Nations country team and the Peacebuilding Fund, to provide coordinated support to build the capacities and enhance the effectiveness of the judicial system, including where appropriate and mandated through the provision of financial and technical assistance to the Central African Republic authorities towards the restoration of the administration of the judiciary, criminal justice and building of child protection systems throughout the country.

5. The Working Group agreed to address a message, through a public statement by the Chair of the Working Group, to community and religious leaders:

(a) Emphasizing the important role of community and religious leaders in strengthening the protection of children affected by armed conflict and fostering reconciliation efforts;

(b) Urging them to strengthen community-level protection and to publicly condemn and continue to advocate ending and preventing violations and abuses against children, notably those involving the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks and threats of attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions and denial of humanitarian access, including on the basis of religion or ethnicity, and to engage with the Government, the United Nations, and other relevant stakeholders to support the reintegration and rehabilitation of children affected by armed conflict in their communities, including by raising awareness to avoid the stigmatization of these children.

Recommendations to the Security Council

6. The Working Group agreed to recommend the following to the Security Council:

(a) To ensure that the situation of children affected by armed conflict continues to be taken into account by the Security Council when discussing the mandate of MINUSCA and its activities;

(b) To ensure the continuation of and support for the implementation of a child protection mandate for MINUSCA, including with regard to monitoring and reporting on violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict, as well as preventing such violations and abuses, including through training and the mainstreaming of child protection, and to maintain and further reinforce child protection capacity and expertise within the Mission;

(c) To continue to encourage MINUSCA, in line with its mandate, to help build the capacities and enhance the effectiveness of the national judicial system in the area of investigations in order to shed light on violations and abuses of human rights committed against children;

(d) To call upon all parties to armed conflict in the Central African Republic, while noting that a majority of the verified cases were attributed to armed groups, to fully respect applicable international law, including international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law;

(e) To transmit the present document to the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution [2745 \(2024\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic, for consideration and appropriate action.

7. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter addressed to the Government of the Central African Republic:

(a) Welcoming positive steps taken by the Government of the Central African Republic, including the signing of the action plan against the trafficking of children in the Central African Republic with a focus on preventing the use of children by the Armed Forces, and the circular issued by the Minister for National Defence and Reconstruction of the Army, which prohibited the presence of children around military bases of the Armed Forces and MINUSCA;

(b) Further welcoming the validation of a draft protocol for the handover and protection of children allegedly associated with armed groups to the Ministry for the

Promotion of Women, Family and Protection of Children, and calling upon the Government to swiftly adopt and fully implement the protocol;

(c) Expressing grave concern at the violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict during the reporting period, the majority of which were committed by armed groups, including those involving the recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access; further expressing concern at the continued military use of schools in violation of international law; calling for an immediate halt to such violations and abuses and holding those responsible to account; emphasizing that violence directed against children by State security forces is unacceptable and recalling that the primary responsibility for the protection of children in the Central African Republic lies with the Government of the Central African Republic, and urging the Government to continue to take positive steps in that regard;

(d) Welcoming the continued implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the Luanda road map and the expansion to the local level, while stressing the need to accelerate the implementation of the Peace Agreement; further welcoming the revitalization of the peace process, which resulted in the dissolution of six armed groups, three factions of signatories to the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the disarmament of 1,366 armed group elements;

(e) Welcoming the arrests and conviction by the Central African Republic authorities of perpetrators of crimes against children, and encouraging the Government to continue to strengthen the ongoing efforts to ensure all cases of violations and abuses against children are addressed;

(f) Stressing the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses against children in armed conflict in that regard, welcoming the gradual operationalization of the military justice system and proceedings before domestic courts, the Special Criminal Court and other courts; remaining preoccupied by the prevalence of impunity for perpetrators of crimes involving violations of international law; and urging the authorities to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely and systematic independent investigation and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction;

(g) Calling upon the Special Criminal Court, which was inaugurated in 2018, to integrate all violations and abuses against children in its prosecution strategy, calling upon the Government to respect the independence and impartiality of the Court; and noting the conviction, by the Trial Chamber of the Special Criminal Court in October 2022, of Retour, réclamation et rehabilitation (3R) military leader Issa Sallet Adoum for rape as a crime against humanity and a war crime committed by his subordinates;

(h) Welcoming the appointment of a human rights focal point at the headquarters of the Armed Forces to address child protection concerns and accountability for the six grave violations committed by the Armed Forces, and encouraging the integration of child protection standards throughout the development of transitional justice processes, such as the screening of individuals entering the Central African Republic defence and security forces for violations and abuses against children, as well as the continued screening of other security personnel;

(i) Welcoming the release of 57 children who had been detained for their alleged association with armed groups, following advocacy, and a presidential decree granting them clemency on 2 December 2022, and encouraging the Government to continue to treat these children primarily as victims of recruitment and use, to hand

them immediately and without preconditions over to relevant civilian child protection actors, noting the need to prevent re-recruitment and to include those children in gender-sensitive and disability-inclusive programmes, and to ensure that, where children face prosecution for allegedly committing crimes, those prosecutions respect the rights of the child;

(j) Encouraging the Government to increase funding for long-term and sustainable reintegration opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive and disability-inclusive, including access to health care, mental health and psychosocial support and education programmes; welcoming in this regard the fact that the implementation of local mechanisms in response to security threats entailed progress on disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation efforts, community reconciliation efforts and voluntary returns; and further encouraging the Government and partners to integrate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of children into the national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme and to ensure that child protection continues to be prioritized as a cross-cutting issue in relevant areas, including security sector reform, and to enable children to gain access to community violence reduction programmes where feasible, as well as raising awareness and working with communities to avoid the stigmatization of these children and facilitate their return, while taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys, including children with disabilities, to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security and to address the root causes of recruitment; in this regard, noting with appreciation the operationalization of one vocational training centre for children in Ouaka prefecture from the age of 14 years, and encouraging the Government to continue such initiatives;

(k) Welcoming the deployment of the Unité mixte d'intervention rapide et de répression des violences sexuelles faites aux femmes et aux enfants to Mbomou in early 2022 to investigate incidents of sexual violence against women and girls that took place between December 2020 and April 2021; noting the transfer of the evidence collected to the Special Criminal Court for further investigation in January 2023; and calling upon the Government to address the practice of "friendly arrangements" and to ensure comprehensive support programmes that are accessible to all victims and survivors and that include child-friendly and safe reporting and response mechanisms;

(l) Calling upon the Government to ensure access for victims and survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence to gender- and age-sensitive comprehensive specialized services for survivors, taking into account the specific needs of girls and boys, as well as accountability for those who commit or are otherwise responsible for sexual and gender-based violence against children, while ensuring the security of victims, witnesses and their communities;

(m) Recalling the Government of the Central African Republic's endorsement of the Safe Schools Declaration in June 2015, in this regard encouraging the Government to implement the Safe Schools Declaration, to cease and prevent attacks on schools and hospitals in violation of international law, and to ensure that such attacks on schools and the military use of schools are investigated and that those responsible are duly prosecuted, as appropriate;

(n) Encouraging the Government to work on the prevention of violations and abuses against children, as per Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), including through the development with armed groups and civil society of a national prevention plan; welcoming in this regard the preparation of a strategy for a national plan on the prevention of the six grave violations, the implementation of which will be

spearheaded by the National Council on Child Protection, and urging its development, adoption and implementation;

(o) Inviting the Government of the Central African Republic to keep the Working Group informed, as appropriate, of its efforts to implement the recommendations of the Working Group and of the Secretary-General.

8. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter to the Secretary-General:

(a) Encouraging the Secretary-General to continue to call upon all parties engaged in armed conflict in the Central African Republic to fully respect international law, including international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as applicable;

(b) Commending the United Nations on the active engagement with parties to the conflict and the country task force on monitoring and reporting for its work in the Central African Republic, and requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the country task force on monitoring and reporting in the Central African Republic and other relevant United Nations agencies continue their engagement and support to the Government of the Central African Republic to end, prevent and address violations and abuses against children in armed conflict;

(c) Requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the country task force on monitoring and reporting continues its engagement with parties to conflict in line with resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) to advocate for the release and reintegration of children and facilitate the adoption of action plans to end and prevent violations and abuses against children;

(d) Requesting the Secretary-General to continue to ensure the effectiveness of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic and of the Child Protection Section of MINUSCA, including by ensuring that sufficient child protection capacities are allocated to the Mission;

(e) Recalling the directive issued by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic to the MINUSCA Force Commander and the Police Commissioner prohibiting the use of schools during the conduct of their activities, further recalling the Force Commander's directive on child protection, issued in December 2018 by the MINUSCA Force Commander, and calling for the full implementation of those directives and for the finalization of the Police Commissioner's directive on child protection;

(f) Expressing deep concern over the serious allegations of continued sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers in MINUSCA, and requesting the Secretary-General to take all necessary measures to ensure full compliance of MINUSCA civilian and uniformed personnel, including Mission leadership and Mission support personnel, with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse and to keep the Council fully informed about the Mission's progress in this regard, stressing the need to prevent all violations and abuses against children, including sexual exploitation and abuse and to improve how these allegations are addressed in line with resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#);

(g) Requesting the Secretary-General to ensure that the matter of children and armed conflict is included as a specific element in all country-specific reports on the Central African Republic;

(h) Requesting the Secretary-General to disseminate the present document to the relevant entities within the United Nations system.

9. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council transmit a letter to the Chair of the Security Council Committee pursuant to resolution 2745 (2024):

(a) Recalling paragraph 9 (c) of resolution 1998 (2011), in which the Security Council requested enhanced communication between the Working Group and relevant Security Council sanctions committees, including through the exchange of pertinent information on violations and abuses committed against children in armed conflict;

(b) Welcoming the designation for sanctions by the Committee of individuals involved in the planning, directing or committing of acts that violate international human rights law or international humanitarian law, as applicable, or that constitute human rights abuses or violations, and/or the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in violation of applicable international law, taking note of the reports of the Panel of Experts in line with resolution 2693 (2023);

(c) Encouraging the Committee to continue to consider the designation for sanctions of other individuals and entities, in accordance with the rules and guidelines of the Committee, and stressing that measures imposed by the Committee are not intended to have adverse humanitarian consequences for the civilian population, including children, in the Central African Republic.

Direct action by the Working Group

10. The Working Group agreed to send letters from the Chair of the Working Group to the World Bank and donors:

(a) Stressing the critical needs of children in the Central African Republic, and calling upon the international community to support and cooperate with the Government in developing and implementing national policies, programmes and initiatives to enhance the protection and reintegration of children, while recalling that funding, technical assistance and development programmes should be considered in consultation with Central African authorities;

(b) Requesting in this regard the World Bank and other donors to provide flexible, predictable and adequate funding and support to the Government and relevant humanitarian and development partners, to strengthen child protection and reintegration efforts, including:

(i) The establishment of effective recruitment procedures and age assessment mechanisms in the national security forces to prevent the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law;

(ii) The development and implementation of long-term, sustainable and comprehensive reintegration programmes that are gender- and age-sensitive and disability-inclusive for children formerly associated with national armed forces or armed groups, emphasizing the importance of psychosocial support, socioeconomic reintegration and community reconciliation, as well as prevention of re-recruitment and use of children in the Central African Republic;

(iii) The bolstering of systems providing access to appropriate education and vocational training, as well as health care, including mental health and psychosocial services, and nutrition for all children affected by armed conflict, including girls, children with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable children, inter alia, children without parental care and unaccompanied children;

(iv) The establishment of birth and late birth registration as a means to prevent the recruitment and use of children in violation of applicable international law in the Central African Republic;

- (v) The development and implementation of sustainable, long-term strategies to end and prevent sexual and gender-based violence against children in armed conflict in the Central African Republic, including by addressing the widespread social and economic vulnerability and the particular needs of girls and boys affected by the armed conflict, and timely and appropriate care for child survivors of sexual and gender-based violence by facilitating the provision of services, reparations and redress for survivors;
 - (vi) The strengthening of national legal, judicial and governance mechanisms, particularly with regard to addressing impunity for violations and abuses against children in armed conflict, including through supporting the capacity of the criminal justice system and the Special Criminal Court;
 - (vii) The provision of technical assistance to build and strengthen the protection and response capacity of child protection personnel at both the governmental and non-governmental levels;
 - (viii) Systematic and adequately resourced monitoring and reporting activities by the United Nations and partners to identify trends and patterns in violations and abuses against children and related child protection priorities and enhance child protection programming accordingly, including supporting the implementation of and compliance with commitments and action plans to end and prevent violations and abuses against children;
- (c) Inviting the World Bank and donors to keep the Working Group informed, as appropriate, of their funding and assistance efforts.

Annex**Statement by the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations before the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict***

[Original: French]

Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations**Observations and comments by the Central African Republic on the report of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

12 April 2024

Madam Chair,

I would like to congratulate you on your work as Chair of the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict. I would also like to thank Ms. Virginia Gamba for introducing her report and acknowledge the efforts made to report periodically on the situation of children in the Central African Republic in connection with the six grave violations against children. Your work enables us not only to appreciate the efforts that the Government and its partners are making to protect children, but also to remain alert to the many challenges that remain.

Madam Chair,

The Central African Republic regrets, however, that such important work, which should be cooperative and focused on efficiency and the search for lasting solutions, is, in some respects, characterized by slander and gratuitous assertions, as evidenced by the lack of involvement of the administrative and local authorities. This leads us to question whether international standards are being upheld, particularly in terms of the methodology used in investigations and in the verification and processing of the data collected.

The Government deplores the failure to specify the areas where the information was collected and to provide the exact details of the locations where events occurred, including the exact identities of the units that committed the violations attributed to the forces of the Central African Republic and bilateral forces. Such imprecision makes it difficult for the relevant authorities to bring criminal proceedings against the alleged perpetrators.

To date, to our knowledge, no schools or healthcare facilities have been occupied or attacked by conventional forces. If that is not the case, please provide us with the relevant information (facility locations and names) to enable the Government to take the necessary measures.

Furthermore, the allegations that ex-combatants reintegrated into the defence and security forces as part of the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process are committing human rights violations and instigating tribal, ethnic and religious warfare are false. On the contrary, the Government's approach is aimed at strengthening social cohesion and peaceful coexistence between the various communities by bolstering awareness-raising programmes targeting the general public and the defence and security forces, with a view to preventing all types of violations.

* The present annex is being issued without formal editing.

The Central African Republic therefore rejects all the accusations against its security forces and allied forces made in the report. Nevertheless, the violations mentioned in the report will be investigated.

Regrettably, and as is customary in the reports of the Working Group, there is no mention of the crimes and violations of children's rights committed by the forces of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and other international forces operating in the country, or of the lack of justice for the many victims of crimes committed by members of the aforementioned forces, some of whom have been waiting 10 years for justice to be served. Unfortunately, they will have to accept the repatriation of those forces as their sole consolation.

The Central African Republic continues, each day, to lay the groundwork to ensure that the perpetrators of such crimes will be held accountable.

It was in that spirit that the President of the Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, by Decree No. 23.246 of 9 October 2023, appointed two specialized deputy public prosecutors, one responsible for combating conflict-related sexual violence and trafficking in persons, and the other specializing in the protection of minors. That initiative, along with others such as the adoption of legislation on legal aid for victims and the protection of victims and witnesses, will enable us, we hope, to hold accountable more individuals who violate children's rights. The plan to expand the reach of the joint rapid response unit to prevent sexual violence against women and children to cover the seven regions of the country will also contribute to that objective.

In addition, the Government has strengthened its legal framework with the promulgation, in 2020, of the Child Protection Code. Article 179 of the Code stipulates that violations of children's rights (including recruitment and rape) are punishable by 10 to 20 years' imprisonment and a fine of between 5 million and 25 million CFA francs.

The Code was applied at the most recent criminal hearings, resulting in the sentencing of several perpetrators of offences linked to the six grave violations of children's rights to prison terms ranging from 10 to 20 years, along with heavy fines.

In addition, by Decree No. 23.255 of 31 October 2023, the Government established the National Council for the Promotion and Protection of Children's Rights to oversee and coordinate all actions carried out in the interests of children.

Since 2014, through the programme for the reintegration of child soldiers, 15,500 children, 30 per cent of whom are girls, have been released from armed groups. That is proof enough of the determination of the Government, which is sparing no effort to ensure that children are protected.

In 2023, with the support of MINUSCA, the Government adopted a plan on preventing the six grave violations of children's rights in times of conflict.

Combating violence against children and the use of children is one of the priorities of the Government of the Central African Republic, which is why the issue was enshrined in the Constitution of the seventh Republic of 30 August 2023.

In conclusion, the Central African Republic would like to express its wish for meaningful multifaceted support from its partners, which will enable it to properly perform its monitoring role and continue to support the reintegration of ex-combatants and children released from armed groups. Owing to its multidimensional nature, the issue of child protection requires a holistic approach.

I thank you.