



# Security Council

Distr.: General  
17 June 2020

Original: English

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## Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

### Conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic

1. At its 87th meeting, on 8 November 2019, the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict examined the fourth report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic ([S/2019/852](#)), which covers the period from 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2019 and was introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. The Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations also addressed the Working Group.
2. The members of the Working Group welcomed the report of the Secretary-General, in accordance with Security Council resolutions [1612 \(2005\)](#), [1882 \(2009\)](#), [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2068 \(2012\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#), [2225 \(2015\)](#) and [2427 \(2018\)](#), and took note of the analysis and recommendations contained therein.
3. The members of the Working Group expressed deep concern at the grave violations and abuses against children which continue to be committed by armed groups in the Central African Republic. They welcomed the signature of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019, as well as the Action Plans signed by 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). They discussed furthermore the child protection elements in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) mandate, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme of the Central African Republic, the draft child protection code, the development of a national prevention plan, reintegration programmes, services for victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence, and the work of the Special Criminal Court.
4. 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 \(2015\)](#) and [2427 \(2018\)](#), the Working Group agreed to the direct action as set out below.

#### Public statement by the Chair of the Working Group

5. The Working Group agreed to address a message, through a public statement by its Chair, to the following:



*To all armed groups operating in the Central African Republic, in particular the former Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC), as well as the local militias known as anti-balaka and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General*

(a) Expressing grave concern at and its strongest condemnation of the grave violations and abuses that continue to be committed against children in the Central African Republic, and urging them to immediately end and prevent all violations of applicable international law 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 and to comply with their obligations under international law;

(b) Welcoming the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic (hereafter "the Peace Agreement") between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019, which contains several child protection provisions, expressing deep concern that, despite encouraging steps in the implementation process and overall improvement of the security situation, armed groups continued to commit violations and abuses and reports of killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access, including attacks against humanitarian personnel, were verified, and urging the signatories to the Peace Agreement to reinforce their efforts to implement it, including its specific provisions to protect children, and end and prevent grave violations and abuses against them;

(c) Expressing deep concern and condemnation of the continued recruitment and use of children, welcoming the release from armed groups of over 8,600 boys and girls and strongly urging all armed groups to immediately and without conditions release all children still associated with them, urging in particular those armed groups participating in the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme to share lists of associated children and facilitate their separation before and during the implementation of the programme, and urging all armed groups 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, as applicable;

(d) Expressing deep concern at the killing and maiming of children, including those resulting from attacks against their communities due to their ethnic and/or religious identity, and urging all armed groups to cease the killing and maiming of children;

(e) Expressing deep concern at cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against girls and boys, and urging all armed groups 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;

(f) Strongly condemning the abduction of children, of which the majority of cases were attributed to the Lord's Resistance Army, and calling upon all concerned parties to cease the abduction of children and immediately release all abducted children;

(g) Strongly condemning the attacks on schools and hospitals in violation of international law, and calling upon all armed groups to comply with applicable international law and to respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals,

including their personnel, as such, and to end and prevent disproportionate or indiscriminate attacks or threats of attacks against those institutions and their personnel, as well as the military use of schools and hospitals in violation of applicable international law;

(h) Strongly condemning the increasing incidents of denial of humanitarian access, including attacks on humanitarian personnel, and calling upon all armed groups to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unhindered humanitarian access to children, consistent with the United Nations guiding principles of humanitarian assistance, 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;

(i) Welcoming the signing of an action plan with the United Nations by MPC in May 2018, by FPRC in June 2019 and by UPC in August 2019, the issuing of command orders to stop the recruitment and use of children, the subsequent release of children and the appointment of child protection focal points by these three armed groups, urging them to swiftly implement these action plans, and urging all other armed groups 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;

(j) Recalling that the situation in the Central African Republic since 1 August 2012 was referred by the national authorities to the International Criminal Court on 30 May 2014, that the Prosecutor of the Court announced a decision on 24 September 2014 to open an investigation into the alleged perpetration by all parties, including the ex-Séléka and anti-balaka groups, of crimes against humanity and war crimes, including the use of children in armed combat, and that some acts mentioned in paragraph 5 (a) above may amount to crimes under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which the Central African Republic is a State party, and taking note, in that respect, of the transfer of anti-balaka leaders Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona to the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity;

(k) Recalling that the Security Council, by its resolution [2454 \(2019\)](#), renewed until 31 January 2020 the asset freeze and travel ban measures imposed by resolutions [2127 \(2013\)](#) and [2134 \(2014\)](#), which apply to individuals and entities as designated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to paragraph 57 of resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) (“2127 sanctions committee”), 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, 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;

(l) 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 the Government of the Central African Republic*

(m) Welcoming the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019, and calling upon the parties to reinforce their efforts to implement it, including its specific provisions to protect children, and end and prevent grave violations and abuses against them;

(n) Stressing the primary role of the Government in providing protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict in the Central African Republic, welcoming the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict on 21 September 2017, urging the Government to rapidly domesticate it, welcoming the adoption of the child protection code that includes the criminalization of child recruitment and use, and encouraging the Government to promptly adopt the protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors;

(o) Stressing the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses against children in armed conflict, taking note of the transfer of anti-balaka leaders Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona to the International Criminal Court, but remaining preoccupied by the prevalence of impunity for perpetrators of grave violations and abuses against children, and urging the authorities to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely and systematic investigation and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction;

(p) Calling upon the Special Criminal Court, which was inaugurated in 2018, to integrate all grave violations and abuses against children in its prosecution strategy;

(q) Encouraging the establishment of the commission on truth, justice, reconciliation and reparations, as foreseen in the Peace Agreement, and the integration of child protection standards throughout the development of transitional justice processes, such as the screening of individuals entering the Central African defence and security forces for grave violations against children;

(r) Expressing concern about the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups, and urging the Government 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 and to ensure that, where children face prosecution for allegedly committing crimes, those prosecutions respect the rights of the child;

(s) Encouraging the Government to focus on long-term and sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive, including access to health care, psychosocial support and education programmes, 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 for children with disabilities, to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security, and encouraging the Government to nominate a child protection focal point within the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme;

(t) Calling upon the Government to ensure access for survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence to 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;

(u) Encouraging the Government to work on the prevention of grave 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;

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

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

(w) Calling upon the United Nations and relevant Member States to take appropriate measures, in line with the United Nations zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, to ensure full accountability in cases of such conduct involving their personnel through timely investigation, to take appropriate steps to hold perpetrators accountable and repatriate units when there is credible evidence of widespread or systemic sexual exploitation and abuse by those units, 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 of a Field Victims' Rights Advocate by MINUSCA and the adoption of a victim-centred approach, enabling most child victims to access services and education/vocation training;

(x) Urging further efforts by relevant Member States to take appropriate preventative action, including 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, regional organizations and all international partners*

(y) Encouraging neighbouring States, regional organizations and all international partners to support the peace process, including to end and prevent grave violations and abuses against children, in a coherent and coordinated manner and through strengthened partnerships, and emphasizing the important role of the guarantors and facilitators of the Peace Agreement, including the African Union, the Economic Community of Central African States and neighbouring states, using their influence to enhance adherence by armed groups to their commitments.

6. 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 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, 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 stigmatization of these children.

### **Recommendations to the Security Council**

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 the signing of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic between the Government of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019, and calling upon the Government to reinforce their efforts to implement the Agreement, including its specific provisions to protect children, and end and prevent grave violations and abuses against them;

(b) Stressing the primary role of the Government in providing protection and relief to all children affected by armed conflict in the Central African Republic, welcoming the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict on 21 September 2017, urging the Government to rapidly domesticate it, welcoming the adoption of the child protection code that includes the criminalization of child recruitment and use, and encouraging the Government to promptly adopt the protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors;

(c) Stressing the importance of accountability for all violations and abuses against children in armed conflict, taking note of the transfer of anti-balaka leaders Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona to the International Criminal Court, but remaining preoccupied by the prevalence of impunity for perpetrators of grave violations and abuses against children and urging the authorities to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice and held accountable without undue delay, including through timely and systematic investigation and, as appropriate, prosecution and conviction;

(d) Calling upon the Special Criminal Court, which was inaugurated in 2018, to integrate all grave violations and abuses against children in its prosecution strategy;

(e) Encouraging the establishment of the commission on truth, justice, reconciliation and reparations, as foreseen in the Peace Agreement, and the integration of child protection standards throughout the development of transitional justice processes, such as the screening of individuals entering the Central African defence and security forces for grave violations against children;

(f) Expressing concern about the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups, and urging the Government 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 and to ensure that, where children face prosecution for allegedly committing crimes, those prosecutions respect the rights of the child;

(g) Encouraging the Government to focus on long-term and sustainable reintegration and rehabilitation opportunities for children affected by armed conflict that are gender- and age-sensitive, including access to health care, psychosocial support and education programmes, 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 for children with disabilities, to contribute to the well-being of children and to sustainable peace and security, and encouraging the Government to nominate a child protection focal point within the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme;

(h) Calling upon the Government to ensure access for survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence to 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;

(i) Encouraging the Government to work on the prevention of grave 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;

(j) 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 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) Commending the Secretary-General on the active engagement with parties to conflict and fruitful work of the country task force on monitoring and reporting in the Central African Republic, and requesting him 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 address and prevent violations and abuses against children in armed conflict;

(b) 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, while welcoming the adoption of action plans with the MPC, FPRC and UPC factions of the ex-Séléka;

(c) 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;

(d) 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, welcoming 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;

(e) Expressing deep concern over the continuing and serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by United Nations peacekeepers in MINUSCA and by non-United Nations forces, 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, including by reporting on the start, agreed deadlines, and outcomes of 2272 reviews, stressing the need to prevent such exploitation and abuse and to improve how these allegations are addressed in line with resolution [2272 \(2016\)](#);

(f) 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;

(g) 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 established pursuant to paragraph 57 of resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#):

(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 violation and abuses committed against children in armed conflict;

(b) Welcoming the convening of a joint briefing by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the Working Group and the Committee on 29 July 2019, and in this regard encouraging the continued sharing of relevant information by the Special Representative with the Committee and the Working Group;

(c) Welcoming the designation for sanctions by the Committee, pursuant to resolution [2262 \(2016\)](#) and resolution [2339 \(2017\)](#), between 16 March 2016 and 17 May 2017, of three 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 violation of applicable international law;

(d) 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;

(e) Welcoming the visit of the Chair and members of the Committee to the Central African Republic from 1 to 4 October 2019 to engage in outreach activities aimed at obtaining first-hand accounts concerning the effective implementation of the sanctions measures, including with civil society representatives, with a particular focus on women and children.

10. 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, especially 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 child protection capacity and expertise within the Mission;

(c) To transmit the present document to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic.

#### **Direct action by the Working Group**

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

(a) Stressing the critical needs of children in the Central African Republic, and calling upon the international community to support the Government in developing and implementing national policies, programmes and initiatives to enhance the protection of children;

(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 efforts, including:

- (i) The establishment of 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, multisectoral, family- and community-based release and reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with 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 and nutrition for all children affected by armed conflict, including girls, children with disabilities and other particularly vulnerable children, inter alia, orphans 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;
  - (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 Permanent Representative of the Central African Republic to the United Nations before the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**

**8 November 2019**

I would like to thank Belgium for having invited me to take part in this meeting to present the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic and for the exceptional role that Belgium is playing in its capacity as Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, as well as for its support for the mandate on children in armed conflict.

I would also like to thank the Special Representative, Virginia Gamba, for her comprehensive and enlightening presentation, which covers a long period and says a lot about the plight of children from 2016 to 2019. We are grateful to her for her leadership in this very complex field.

Despite the remarkable work of child protection actors on the ground, there has been a worrying increase in the number of violations of children's rights, although there have been moments of respite.

Indeed, throughout the crisis affecting the Central African Republic since December 2012, the situation of children has been and remains particularly difficult. Successive reports of the Secretary-General on this issue have documented massive violations committed by armed groups. The statistics presented in the report under review give us some alarming figures: between January 2016 and June 2019 grave violations were committed against 1,364 children (650 girls and 714 boys) and there were 138 attacks on schools and hospitals, which are often used for military purposes.

Children are subjected to all kinds of violence, denying them respect as vulnerable beings. The boys and girls brutally killed and mutilated are being considered and treated in the same way as adults.

Armed groups have conscripted or recruited children by force and with the threat of reprisals.

My delegation agrees with the Special Representative that preventing violations against children must be one of the Government's main concerns. We had thought that the inclusion of a special mention to that effect in the Political Agreement signed by the 14 armed groups and the Government would ultimately ensure respect for the rights of children. However, the flagrant and deliberate violation of the Agreement by certain armed groups brings us back to the sad reality that they will never honour their commitments.

We have also seen this in the failure to comply with the action plans that some leaders of armed groups willingly accepted at the outset, and yet action plans with parties to a conflict provide the main engagement framework to address immediate protection concerns and to prevent future violations. That is why it is important to continue to promote the work with both State and non-State actors in order to follow up on the implementation of these plans and to conclude new ones.

My country is aware of the difficulties in mobilizing to prevent and respond to violations committed by non-State armed groups.

We also know that the peace process can be a vehicle for promoting the protection of children and for promoting reintegration and reconciliation. Provisions on the protection of children, including their release and integration, should form part of the early stages of ceasefire and peace negotiations.

Too often children associated with non-State armed groups are perceived as a security threat and as perpetrators, rather than as victims of grave violations. The report under review provides us with specific examples of children being arrested and detained. While it is a priority to put in place alternatives to detention and prosecution, the monitoring and reporting on the detention of children for being associated with armed forces or groups needs to continue. To that end, it is crucial to deploy Child Protection Advisers, and the example set within the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is encouraging.

The Central African Republic has endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration, as attacks on schools and their occupation put children at risk of injury or death. My country has also endorsed the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers as a measure to give priority to and further implement child protection within United Nations peacekeeping.

The level and gravity of the violations that fill the pages of this report remind us of the sad reality of children's daily suffering. More than 20 years ago, in the Graça Machel report on the impact of armed conflict on children, the United Nations concluded that the best way to protect children was to prevent the outbreak of armed conflicts. All United Nations reports and resolutions have confirmed this, including Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#), adopted on 9 July 2018. The protection of children in armed conflict must be an important aspect of any comprehensive strategy for resolving the conflict in my country and an integral part of all mechanisms established by United Nations entities.

I would like to conclude by quoting the Special Representative, when she presented the report of the Secretary-General ([S/2018/465](#)) on 9 July 2018 and said the following words: "I began my statement by painting a grim picture of several conflict situations – and I could have mentioned many more. Yet we must not leave the Chamber today in despair. The resolution adopted today is a further step in strengthening the framework of child protection provided by the Council, which has given us the tools to engage in ways that would have been unthinkable just a few years ago. Our capacity to jointly put those tools to work will decide the fate of thousands of children, and ultimately whether we are able to move closer to ending forever the use and abuse of children in, and for armed conflict."

My delegation is convinced that her Office and the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict will achieve that outcome. For its part, the Government of the Central African Republic will continue to support the campaign "Children, Not Soldiers".