

Meetings: International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, 2022

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9010 31 March						S/PRST/2022/2
S/PV.9062 14 June			Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Rwanda, Serbia	President of the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, Prosecutor of the Mechanism	All Council members, all invitees ^a	
S/PV.9072 22 June		Draft resolution submitted by Gabon (S/2022/501)				Resolution 2637 (2022) (adopted under Chapter VII) 14-0-1 ^b
S/PV.9217 12 December	Note by the Secretary-General on the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals (S/2022/583)		Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Rwanda, Serbia	President of the Mechanism, Prosecutor of the Mechanism	All Council members, all invitees	

^a Serbia was represented by its Minister of Justice.

^b For: Albania, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States; against: none; abstaining: Russian Federation.

26. Children and armed conflict

During the period under review, the Council held one open debate in connection with the item entitled “Children and armed conflict”.⁹⁹⁸ More information on the meeting, including on participants and speakers, is provided in table 1 below.⁹⁹⁹

The open debate, held on 19 July, was convened at the initiative of Brazil, which held the presidency for the month,¹⁰⁰⁰ in connection with the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.¹⁰⁰¹ The open debate was chaired by the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Brazil and featured briefings by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, the Executive Director of the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the founder and Executive Director of the non-governmental organization Similar Ground.¹⁰⁰²

In her remarks, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict noted that the abuses that children had been subjected to the previous year had been as grievous as they had been many. She reported that, in 2021, a total of 23,982 grave violations against over 19,165 children had been verified in the 21 country situations and one regional monitoring arrangement covered by her mandate. She added that, in 2021, 8,000 children had been either killed or maimed, making killing

⁹⁹⁸ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

⁹⁹⁹ See also [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 14.

¹⁰⁰⁰ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 5 July ([S/2022/540](#)).

¹⁰⁰¹ [S/2022/493](#).

¹⁰⁰² See [S/PV.9096](#) and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#).

and maiming the most prevalent of all grave violations. With more than 6,300 verified cases, the recruitment and use of children for, in and by parties to armed conflict had been the second most prevalent violation, followed by the denial of humanitarian access to children, with more than 3,900 incidents. The Special Representative expressed concern over the increase in cases of abduction, rape and other forms of sexual violence and the steady increase in violations against girls, especially killing and maiming, sexual violence and abduction. She also noted a general rise in attacks on schools and hospitals and a verified increase in the military use of schools. She added that the Secretary-General had included the situations of Ethiopia, Mozambique and Ukraine in the children and armed conflict agenda due to the severity of the armed violence, conflict and war in those places and would begin monitoring to report on those situations by 2023. With regard to positive developments, she highlighted the implementation of 17 joint action plans with parties to conflict, the adoption of 40 new commitments and agreed measures, and the release of over 12,200 children from armed groups and forces in 2021, following advocacy by the United Nations. In addition, progress had been made in analysis, policy development and partnerships and in prevention mechanisms in line with resolution 2427 (2018), including the launch of a guidance note on the violation of abduction, the publishing of studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on grave violations against children in armed conflict and the issuance of a report consolidating the results of the four regional consultations conducted to identify challenges and collect lessons learned to strengthen the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict. In conclusion, the Special Representative highlighted three of the recommendations outlined in the report of the Secretary-General: first, ensuring that United Nations operations on the ground were adequately mandated, staffed and funded to continue to carry out their mandate in relation to the protection of children; second, safeguarding humanitarian spaces and ensuring safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to all children; and third, ensuring sustainable financial support and technical assistance for timely, gender-, age- and disability-sensitive, survivor-centred and inclusive reintegration programmes for children, which were critical for breaking cycles of violence and allowing child survivors a second chance at a constructive life. In concluding, she stressed that the best way to protect children and prevent violations against them in situations of armed conflict was to promote and champion peace.

While lamenting the continued proliferation of conflicts and grave violations against children, and the addition of three new situations to the report of the Secretary-General, the Executive Director of UNICEF underscored the progress made, in particular the removal of eight situations from the report and the release of over 10,000 children from armed forces and groups, bringing the total number of children documented to have been released since 2000 to more than 186,000. She emphasized the continued commitment of the United Nations to protecting children in accordance with humanitarian principles, while underlining that Member States had enormous power to drive progress to protect children. She called upon Member States not only to insist on compliance with international humanitarian law but also to use their power to issue military orders with zero-tolerance policies on grave violations against children, to endorse and implement the Safe Schools Declaration, to use their influence to urge States and non-State armed groups to prevent and end grave violations against children, to protect children who had survived grave violations from stigma and revictimization, and to support United Nations efforts through the allocation of resources and a commitment to supporting the agenda.

In his briefing, the founder and Executive Director of the non-governmental organization Similar Ground shared with the Council his personal experience, first being forced to become a child soldier when he was growing up, then escaping to Uganda to become a refugee, eventually joining the War Child programme known as VoiceMore, a youth-led advocacy programme, and running a project for orphans and separated children, and finally setting up, together with friends, a community-based organization, Similar Ground, to help hundreds of children to recover from stress and trauma. On the basis of his experience, he proposed four recommendations to the Council, relating to the reintegration of children, longer-term funding for projects and local organizations and community groups, greater participation in decision-making for children and young people, and greater accountability for violations of humanitarian law, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions and relevant Council resolutions concerning the protection of children.

In their statements, Council members and other delegations expressed concern at the growing number of children subjected to all six grave violations against children in armed conflict, as defined in

the relevant Council resolutions. Speakers also stressed that children associated with armed or terrorist groups should be treated not as criminals but rather as victims.¹⁰⁰³ The representative of Kenya expressed his belief that human rights-sensitive and effective counter-terrorism was a key tool in the protection of children and called for a more robust and consistent counter-terrorism regime to protect children.¹⁰⁰⁴ Many speakers welcomed the inclusion of Ukraine, Mozambique and Ethiopia as situations of concern in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, given the severity of the armed violence in the countries.¹⁰⁰⁵

On the way forward, many speakers underscored that impunity for grave violations against children was unacceptable and called for full accountability through national and international justice mechanisms.¹⁰⁰⁶ Some speakers underlined that all parties to armed conflict must comply with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law and act to prevent and end grave violations against children.¹⁰⁰⁷ In that connection, speakers encouraged all Member States to commit to the Safe Schools Declaration, the Paris Principles and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers and to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.¹⁰⁰⁸

Speakers said that the children and armed conflict agenda should be mainstreamed into all efforts and discussions concerning conflict, including conflict prevention, mediation, peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, and that child protection provisions and capacities should be incorporated adequately into all relevant mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and political missions.¹⁰⁰⁹ To facilitate responses to threats against children, speakers urged full support for the allocation of targeted and rapid resources to provide safe accommodation and enhanced protection for displaced refugees and stateless children victims of the six grave violations against children in conflict, and to enable the safe and meaningful participation of victims and survivors in legal proceedings to end impunity.¹⁰¹⁰ The majority of speakers noted that the fight against grave violations should not end with the release of children but should also include their reintegration into society.

Affirming the important role of the listing mechanism of the annual report of the Secretary-General in child protection, speakers maintained that clear, objective, impartial, transparent and measurable listing criteria were critical.¹⁰¹¹ Noting with concern that the report of the Secretary-General included situations that were not situations of armed conflict or threats to the maintenance of international peace

¹⁰⁰³ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Brazil, Norway, Ghana, China, Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict) and Switzerland); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Slovenia, Italy, Andorra and Chile).

¹⁰⁰⁴ See [S/PV.9096](#)

¹⁰⁰⁵ See [S/PV.9096](#) (United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Albania, Canada and Ukraine); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Italy, Germany, European Union (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine), Belgium, Poland, Slovakia, Australia and Bulgaria).

¹⁰⁰⁶ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Brazil, Norway, France, India, Gabon, Mexico, United Kingdom, Albania, United States, Canada, Malta, Liechtenstein and Uruguay); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Slovenia, Estonia, Denmark, Italy, European Union (also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine), Slovakia, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, State of Palestine and Morocco).

¹⁰⁰⁷ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict) and Malta); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Czechia, Poland, Slovakia, Republic of Korea and Georgia).

¹⁰⁰⁸ See [S/PV.9096](#) (France, India, United Arab Emirates, Kenya, Gabon, Mexico, Ireland, China, Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict), Malta, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Uruguay and Ecuador); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Slovenia, Denmark (on behalf of the Nordic countries), Italy, Germany, Botswana (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict), Slovakia, New Zealand, Spain, Andorra, Malaysia, Georgia, Portugal, Chile and Bulgaria).

¹⁰⁰⁹ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Brazil, Ghana, United States, India, Kenya, Ireland, Albania and Switzerland); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Poland, Thailand, Malaysia, Bulgaria and Türkiye).

¹⁰¹⁰ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Ghana, Canada (on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict), Liechtenstein and Switzerland); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Thailand, Türkiye, South Africa and Bangladesh).

¹⁰¹¹ See [S/PV.9096](#) (Ireland, China, Canada (also on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict), Malta, Liechtenstein and Switzerland); and [S/PV.9096 \(Resumption 1\)](#) (Slovenia and Belgium).

and security, the representative of India cautioned that attempts to selectively expand the mandate would only politicize it.¹⁰¹² The representative of Canada expressed concern about the decision to list the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in annex I.B to the report of the Secretary-General and said that such a decision had set a troubling precedent and should have been taken only on the basis of a significant decrease in serious violations and respect for specific time-bound commitments.

In 2022, the Council addressed the children and armed conflict agenda in several of its country- and region-specific decisions and in decisions relating to thematic items. Selected provisions of decisions in which the Council explicitly referenced actions or measures concerning that agenda in 2022 are listed in table 2. In 2022, the Council, inter alia: (a) condemned and demanded the cessation of violations and abuses against children, including attacks on schools and the deprivation of access to education, and called for accountability and compliance with international instruments; (b) called for the implementation of action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict, with new emphasis on preventing and responding to sexual violence against children; (c) underscored the importance of taking into account child protection concerns in the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration processes and security sector reform; (d) requested monitoring, analysis and reporting on violations and abuses against children; (e) mandated United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions with child protection tasks; (f) imposed or called for the imposition of measures against perpetrators of violations against children; and (g) building on resolution 2601 (2021),¹⁰¹³ called for the protection, respect and promotion of the right to education in armed conflict.

Table 1
Meetings: children and armed conflict, 2022

<i>Meeting record and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Other documents</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
S/PV.9096 and S/PV.9096 (Resumption 1) 19 July	Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (S/2022/493) Letter dated 5 July 2022 from the Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2022/540)		56 Member States ^a	Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Executive Director of the United Nations Children's Fund, Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations; founder and Executive Director of Similar Ground	All Council members, ^b all invitees ^c	

^a Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belgium, Botswana, Bulgaria, Canada, Chile, Czechia, Denmark, Ecuador, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guatemala, Hungary, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Israel, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Myanmar, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Türkiye, Ukraine, Uruguay and Yemen.

^b Brazil (President of the Council) was represented by its Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.

¹⁰¹² See [S/PV.9096](#).

¹⁰¹³ For more information, see *Repertoire, Supplement 2021*, part I, sect. 24.

^c Hungary was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade. The representative of Botswana spoke on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Responsibility to Protect; the representative of Canada spoke also on behalf of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict; the representative of Denmark spoke on behalf of the Nordic countries; and the representative of the European Union spoke also on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine.

Table 2
Selection of provisions relevant to children and armed conflict, by theme and item

	<i>Item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>
Condemnation and demands for the cessation of violations and abuses against children and calls for accountability and compliance with international instruments			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	26, 27, 56
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2666 (2022)	9, 10
	The question concerning Haiti	Resolution 2653 (2022)	1
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2640 (2022)	5, 12, 47
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2628 (2022)	14, 14 (a), (b) and (d)
		Resolution 2657 (2022)	10, 10 (a) (i) and (iv)
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2625 (2022)	17	
Thematic	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	S/PRST/2022/7	fifth
Action plans and programmes on children and armed conflict			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2022/6	nineteenth
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	26, 27
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2666 (2022)	8, 10, 24 (i) (e)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2640 (2022)	48, 49
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2628 (2022)	14 (e)
		Resolution 2657 (2022)	10 (b), 13 (b)
Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2625 (2022)	16, 20 (m)	
Child protection in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes and security sector reform			
Country- and region-specific	Peace and security in Africa	S/PRST/2022/6	sixth
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	11, 36 (e) (i)
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	S/PRST/2022/4 Resolution 2666 (2022)	fourth 11, 24 (ii) (g), (h) and (k)
Thematic	Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts	S/PRST/2022/7	thirteenth

<i>Item</i>	<i>Decision</i>	<i>Paragraph</i>	
Monitoring, analysis and reporting on violations and abuses against children			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2626 (2022)	5 (g)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	36 (b) (ii)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2640 (2022)	26 (d) (ii)
	The situation in Somalia	Resolution 2662 (2022)	48
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2625 (2022)	3 (d) (ii)
		Resolution 2633 (2022)	21
Child protection mandates in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions^a			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2626 (2022)	5 (a), (f) and (j)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	35 (a) (iv), 36 (b) (ii) and (e) (i), 43, 48
	The situation concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo	Resolution 2666 (2022)	24 (i) (e) and (ii) (g), (h) and (k), 28
	The situation concerning Iraq	Resolution 2631 (2022)	2 (c) (ii) and (f)
	The situation in Mali	Resolution 2640 (2022)	26 (c) (iii) and (d) (ii), 41
	Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan and South Sudan	Resolution 2625 (2022)	3 (a) (i) and (v)
Measures against the perpetrators of violations and abuses against children			
Country- and region-specific	The question concerning Haiti	Resolution 2653 (2022)	16 (a) and (e)
	The situation in the Middle East	Resolution 2624 (2022)	12
Calls for the protection, respect and promotion of the right to education in armed conflict			
Country- and region-specific	The situation in Afghanistan	Resolution 2626 (2022)	5 (f)
	The situation in the Central African Republic	Resolution 2659 (2022)	56

^a For additional information on mandates and decisions relevant to peacekeeping and political missions, see part X.

27. Protection of civilians in armed conflict

In 2022, the Council held three meetings in connection with the protection of civilians in armed conflict. Two of the meetings took the form of open debates, and one took the form of a briefing.¹⁰¹⁴ No decisions were adopted under the item during the period under review. More information on the meetings, including on participants and speakers, is given in table 1 below.¹⁰¹⁵

On 25 January, at the initiative of Norway, which held the presidency of the Council for the month,¹⁰¹⁶ the Council held a high-level open debate under the sub-item entitled “War in cities: protection of

¹⁰¹⁴ For more information on the format of meetings, see part II.

¹⁰¹⁵ See also [A/77/2](#), part II, chap. 15.

¹⁰¹⁶ A concept note was circulated by a letter dated 10 January ([S/2022/23](#)).