

MODULE 1, LESSON 1


LEARNER’S HANDOUT

Six Grave Violations against Children

Security Council resolution 1612 (2005): Peacekeeping missions **shall monitor and report** on the six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict. The resolution strongly condemns all violations and abuses committed against children in situations of armed conflict and establishes the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict (paras. 1 and 2). United Nations military personnel are responsible for advocating with armed groups to end violations against children.¹

The following examples are taken from the Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/77/895–S/2023/363), which covers the period from January to December 2022. The six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict are killing and maiming; recruitment and use; abduction; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools or hospitals; and denial of humanitarian access.

1. Killing and Maiming

	<p>Killing and maiming refer to <i>any action that results in the death of or serious injury to one or more children</i>, including, but not limited to:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Shelling</i> • <i>Crossfire</i> • <i>Landmines</i> • <i>Cluster Munitions</i> • <i>Unexploded Ordnances</i> • <i>Suicide bombs</i> • <i>Torture</i>

Afghanistan: A total of **909 child casualties was verified** (732 boys, 177 girls), of which 253 children were killed and 656 children were maimed. Over two thirds of the incidents were the result of explosive ordnances (718) and targeted killings (26).

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The United Nations verified the killing (409) and maiming (290) of **699 children** (445 boys, 254 girls), mostly by armed groups. Targeted attacks against civilians (584),


¹ In United Nations peacekeeping missions, the civilian Child Protection staff takes the lead in formal dialogue with parties to conflict, which may result in formal agreements on ending violations against children. Therefore, military personnel’s engagement with parties to conflict should not be aimed at coming to a formal agreement, but rather at reinforcing the principles that the Child Protection staff will be targeting in a formal engagement. For this reason, military personnel’s engagement with armed forces/groups should be reported to and preferably discussed with the Child Protection staff.



crossfire (34), explosive ordnance (32), torture (22) and attacks in schools (17) were the main causes of child casualties.

Mali: A total of **245 children** (172 boys, 59 girls, 14 unknown gender) were killed (106) and maimed (139) as a result of gunshot wounds during attacks on villages, and explosive ordnance.

2. Recruitment and Use

	<p>Recruitment and use of any person below 18 years of age by an armed force or armed group in any capacity is strictly prohibited under international law. A child associated with an armed force or group is commonly referred to as a “child soldiers”. Their use may include, but is not limited to:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Fighters</i> • <i>Spies</i> • <i>Cooks</i> • <i>Sexual purposes</i> • <i>Porters</i> • <i>Other</i>

Central African Republic: A total of **134 children** (111 boys, 23 girls), some as young as 7, were recruited and used by armed groups. 40 boys served in combat roles. Additionally, a total of 46 children were used by armed forces as cooks, porters, for fetching water and at checkpoints.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: The recruitment and use of **1, 545 children** (958 boys, 195 girls), as young as 5, were verified. A total of 643 children were used in support roles, 585 in combat, 206 as guards, 54 as spies and 26 as fetish keepers. In addition, 1,153 boys and 130 girls were recruited in previous years and used until their separation in 2022.


Somalia: The United Nations verified that **1,094 children** (1,022 boys, 72 girls), as young as 8, were recruited and used by armed groups and forces. A total of 101 children were used as combatants and 146 children in support roles.

South Sudan: A total of **110 children** (107 boys and 3 girls), with 30 children under the age of 15, were recruited and used, mainly in combat, as bodyguards, porters and cooks.

3. Abduction

	<p>Abduction is the <i>unlawful removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child, either temporarily or permanently, for the purpose of any form of exploitation of the child, including but not limited to:</i></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Recruitment by armed forces/group</i> • <i>Taking children hostage</i> • <i>Retaliation/Intimidation</i> • <i>Enforced disappearance</i> • <i>Forced labour</i> • <i>Sexual purposes</i> • <i>Other</i>
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Central African Republic: The abduction of **79 children** (40 boys, 39 girls) were verified, mainly for recruitment purposes and/or sexual violence.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: A total of **730 children** (469 boys, 261 girls), between the ages of 1 and 17, were abducted for recruitment and use, including for the purposes of extortion, sexual violence and torture.

Mali: The abduction of **109 children** (90 boys, 19 girls) were verified, including for recruitment and use, sexual purposes, and as punishment for not respecting rules imposed by armed groups.

4. Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

	<p>Sexual violence refers to <i>any violent act of a sexual nature committed against a child</i>, including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Rape</i> • <i>Sexual slavery</i> • <i>Forced abortion</i> • <i>Forced prostitution</i> • <i>Forced pregnancy</i> • <i>Forced marriage</i> • <i>Other</i>
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Central African Republic: Sexual violence was committed against **75 girls**.


Democratic Republic of the Congo: Sexual violence was perpetrated against **283 girls and 1 boy**. Most of the incidents involved rape (189), forced marriage (40), gang rape (36), and sexual slavery (15).

Somalia: Sexual violence was committed against **219 girls and 2 boys**, including rape (146), attempted rape (37), and forced marriage (28).

South Sudan: Sexual violence was perpetrated against **94 girls**, as young as 7, by armed groups and forces.

5. Attacks on Schools or Hospitals




	<p><i>Any physical attack or threat of attack, targeted or indiscriminate, against schools or hospitals and protected personnel, including, but not limited to:</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Looting and wanton destruction of buildings</i> • <i>Military use</i> • <i>Attacks or threats against children</i> • <i>Attack or threats against on personnel</i> • <i>Other</i>

Central African Republic: The United Nations verified **18 attacks** on schools and hospitals, including protected personnel. Incidents involved looting, destruction, and threats and attacks against personnel. A total of 14 schools were also used for military purposes by armed forces and groups.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: There were a total of **108 attacks** on schools (70) and hospitals (38), and on protected persons. Additionally, 13 schools were used for military purposes by armed forces and groups.

Mali: A total of **97 attacks** on schools (83) and hospitals (14), including protected personnel were verified. Incidents involved destruction and looting of facilities, and attacks and threats against related personnel, including their killing and abduction.

6. Denial of Humanitarian Access

	<p><i>The blocking of free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need (including children), including but not limited to:</i></p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Attacks against humanitarian workers</i> • <i>Looting of humanitarian aid</i> • <i>Denial of access to service delivery</i> • <i>Attacks against humanitarian facilities, assets</i> • <i>Restricting movement of humanitarian personnel/supplies</i> • <i>Attacks on essential services, e.g., water supply</i> • <i>Other</i>

Central African Republic: The United Nations verified **50 incidents** of denial of humanitarian access. The incidents involved robbery, threats, abduction and assaults on humanitarian personnel.

Democratic Republic of the Congo: A total of **11 incidents** of denial of humanitarian access were verified, involving threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, abduction, access restrictions and extortion.

Mali: The United Nations verified **85 incidents** of denial of humanitarian access. Most incidents involved robberies, and killing, abduction, detention and intimidation of humanitarian personnel.