



UNICEF/UN061828/Brown

Donor Report 2022- 2023



Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Foreword by Virginia Gamba

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict



The Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate created through United Nations General Assembly resolution 51/77 and reinforced through the UN Security Council, relies notably on maintaining a robust monitoring and reporting system of grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, engagement with parties to conflict, and necessary resources to enhance and better address the protection of children on a long-term basis.

However, the protection of children in situations of armed conflict was marked in recent years by a relentless – and at times systematic - disregard for international humanitarian and human rights law by armed forces and armed groups, which impeded on the ability to implement the CAAC mandate. Nonetheless, our focus to protect children affected by conflict remained steadfast, with the constant intention of doing better and more.

Partnerships continued to be critical in that aspect, to make sure that our commitments translate into tangible actions. Collaborative and complementary approach continued with, Member States, the United Nations, international and regional entities, civil society, academia, and most importantly, affected communities and children. I continued to foresee the great potential that can be unlocked by increasing regional cooperation on children and armed conflict, and I remain committed to supporting and finding synergies.

Additionally, reliable information on the nature, scope, and push factors of grave violations against children in armed conflict is essential, and my office continued to develop research papers, as well as trainings. Notable progress continued to be achieved, including the signing, issuing, or updating of Action Plans, Handover Protocols, and command orders with governments and armed groups, many of which incorporate preventive measures alongside protective ones.

Ensuring the adequate and long-lasting protection of children stands as a central tenet across various agendas, including humanitarian, development and peace nexus. Therefore, I would like to express my profound gratitude to all donors to the Trust Fund for Children and Armed Conflict and particularly Norway and Qatar for their generous contributions, as well as donors who provided Junior Professional Officers to my office. I would like also to share my appreciation to the United Nations Peace and Development Trust Funds for their support. Your support has empowered my office to fulfill its mandate comprehensively, bolstering our capacity, facilitating fieldwork, and enhancing our response to emerging trends in violations against children, including through the signature of Action Plans.

Thank you,
Virginia Gamba

Four Pillars



Protecting

Children abused
in armed conflict



Preventing

Grave violations
against children



Raising
Awareness

Strengthening
partnerships



Promoting

Lessons learned
& best practices

54

Commitments

- New commitments by parties to conflict were adopted, among others:
- 2 new action plans signed in Yemen by the Houthis and in Iraq by the Government.
 - 2 new Handover Protocols signed in Burkina Faso by the transitional authorities and in Nigeria by the Government.
 - Establishment of CAAC focal points in Mozambique, Ukraine and Somalia.

23,068

Children released by armed forces and armed groups.

Over 12,460 children were released from armed forces and armed groups in 2022 and 10,608 children in 2023; while many benefited from reintegration programmes, some unfortunately did not because of a lack of financial resources.

48

Meetings with parties under the CAAC agenda

36 meetings took place with parties to conflict and 22 meetings took place with governments under the CAAC agenda, to promote the development and implementation of action plans and other commitments to protect children in conflict.

113

Meetings with Member States

50 meetings were held in 2022 and 63 meetings were held in 2023 with Member States to garner support for the CAAC agenda and strengthen partnerships for the protection of children in situations of armed conflict.

21

Group of Friends Briefings

The Special Representative briefed the following Group of Friends:
In 2022: New York (2), Geneva (2), Brussels (3) and Colombia (1)
In 2023: New York (2), Geneva (4), the European Union (3), African Union (1), Mozambique (1), Yemen (1) and Syria (1) - both based in Amman (Jordan).

30

Trips from the Special Representative and/or her team

Countries on the agenda: Colombia, Ethiopia, India, Iraq, Israel and the State of Palestine, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Sudan, Ukraine, Yemen.
Other countries: Argentina, Belgium, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, the Gambia, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Uruguay, Uganda.

18

Reports released

The office releases reports yearly to the Human Rights Council, the General Assembly and the Security Council. During the reporting period, the office released reports on the following country situations: Afghanistan, Iraq, Mali, Nigeria, the Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen.

5

New Publications

- The CAAC Mandate and Children with Disabilities in Armed Conflict
- Climate Insecurity Impacts on Children and Armed Conflict
- The Gender Dimensions of Grave Violations Against Children in Armed Conflict
- Follow-up study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic
- Guidance Note on Abduction

Enhancing partnerships with regional and subregional organizations provides enormous opportunities for the protection of conflict-affected children and is a priority area for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

AFRICAN UNION

- In November 2022, the Office of the Special Representative participated in the annual meeting of the African Union coordination group on children in situations of conflict to discuss cooperation on implementing African Union policies on mainstreaming child protection in the African peace and security architecture and on child protection in African Union peace support operations, as well as joint CAAC initiatives.
- In June 2023, the Special Representative held a meeting in Addis Ababa with the African Union Youth Envoy to discuss the situation of conflict-affected children and young people.
- In December 2023, in Banjul, the Special Representative delivered a briefing on children and armed conflict at a special open session of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union. Participants included the Africa Platform on Children Affected by Armed Conflicts, regional economic communities, regional coordination mechanisms, African Member States and other partners.
- In November and December 2023, the Office of the Special Representative, supported by an early warning expert, conducted missions to Ethiopia and Gabon to engage with early warning stakeholders on the mainstreaming of CAAC in continental and regional early warning systems and initiatives in Africa to inform the development of recommendations, including on CAAC-sensitive early warning indicators.

LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

- In September 2022, the Special Representative addressed the eighteenth session of the League of Arab States (LAS)' Committee on Violence against Children, and in October 2022 she delivered a virtual briefing to the League's Committee on Ending Violence against Children.
- In May 2023, the Office of the Special Representative and the LAS co-organized a regional conference in Doha on the prevention of grave violations against children in armed conflict. The conference, which was hosted by Qatar in its capacity as Chair of the 42nd session of the Council of Arab Ministers for Social Affairs, brought together Arab ministers for social affairs, regional United Nations entities and representatives of the Education Above All Foundation.
- In September 2023, the Special Representative addressed the Council of the League of Arab States on the subject of combating violence against children.



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BRUSSELS (BELGIUM)

The Europe Liaison Office of the Special Representative based in Brussels continued to strengthen engagement with Europe-based partners, including the European Union, NATO and other UN offices and partners in Geneva, Vienna and Paris, as well as civil society organizations and academia based in Europe. Among the activities:

- In June 2022, the Special Representative briefed the Political and Security Committee of the European Union.
- In July and October 2022 as well as in July 2023, the Office of the Special Representative briefed Cabinet members of several European commissioners and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on children and armed conflict issues.
- In September 2022, in the context of the annual OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation, the Special Representative participated in a panel of the security dialogue on children and armed conflict.

The Special Representative met in 2022-2023 with multiple European Union officials, including the European Commission Vice-President for Democracy and Demography, the European Union Commissioner for Crisis Management, the EU Special Representative for Human Rights, and the Managing Director for the Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations at the European External Action Service as well as members of the European Parliament.

The Liaison Office also led to strengthened cooperation with UN human rights mechanisms in Geneva, including the Human Rights Council, and its Special Procedures, and the Universal Periodic Review, and the Committee on the Rights of the Child, including through regular meetings and the issuance of joint statements. The Liaison Office sustained also its collaboration with the ICC. The Office would like to express gratitude to the donors for their generous support to the work of the Europe Liaison Office.

DOHA (QATAR)

In June 2022, the Analysis and Outreach Hub of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict was established in Doha with the support of the State of Qatar to contribute to building institutional knowledge on current and future child protection efforts. The hub plays a role in operationalizing the "Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict," among other areas contributing to the prevention and protection efforts. That same month, the Special Representative attended an event on 'Mediation to protect children in situations of armed conflict at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar.

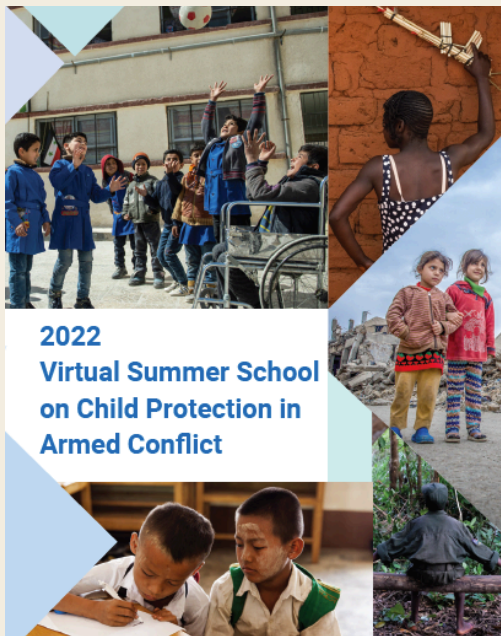
In September 2022, the Special Representative signed a memorandum of understanding with UNESCO for the purpose of collaboration and exchange of expertise on education in the reintegration of conflict-affected children. The first phase of this collaboration entailed the development of a guide tailored to educators and teachers entitled "Education for Children and Young People Formerly Associated with Armed Forces and Armed Groups: Guidance for Teachers and Educators". The guide will be disseminated to several targeted locations on the children and armed conflict agenda upon publication to reach the intended audiences and serve as a pilot for refining the product in the near future. This guide produced from direct collaboration between the Analysis and Outreach Hub and the UNESCO Gulf States and Yemen Office is the first of its kind innovating solutions towards better reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups.

Raising Awareness

The Special Representative continued to use her voice as the UN leading advocate for the protection of children to raise awareness on the plight of children affected by conflict and to call for action in a variety of fora.



The campaign entitled, “Let them play: a child’s place is on the football field, not the battlefield” was launched in November 2022 during the 2022 FIFA World Cup in Qatar to raise awareness on the need to stop the use of children in armed conflict.



2022
Virtual Summer School
on Child Protection in
Armed Conflict

A Virtual Summer School on Child Protection in Armed Conflict was organized via the Liaison Office of the Special Representative from 29 August to 9 September 2022. The ‘After action report on the Virtual Summer School on Child Protection in Armed Conflict’ was launched in May 2023 at a side event with the support of Malta throughout the process.

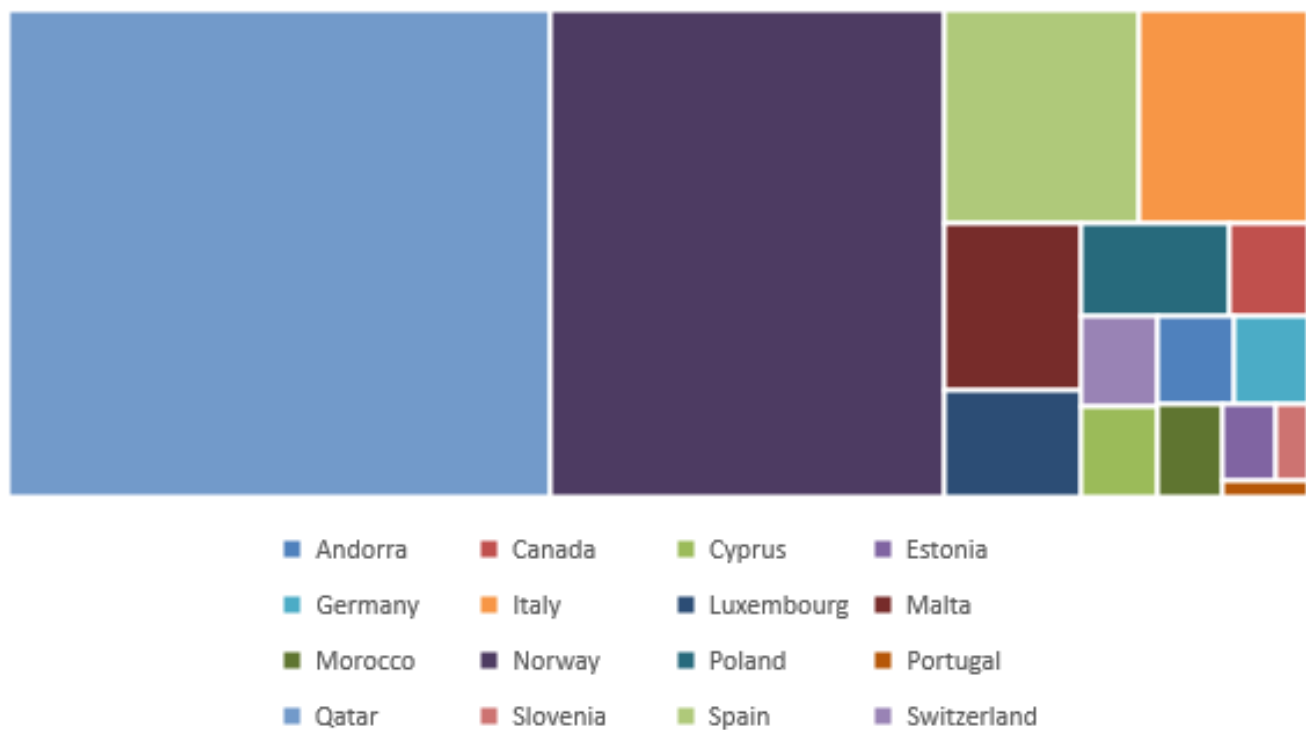


The photo exhibit entitled “From despair to hope: children beyond armed conflict”, featuring stories of conflict-affected children through portraits taken by photojournalist Paddy Dowling, was showcased at the United Nations in New York in May 2022 to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the children and armed conflict mandate, at the Photoville festival in New York in June 2022. It was later featured in Doha in November 2022 on the margins of the FIFA World Cup and at the United Nations Palais de Nations in Geneva in March 2023.

Contribution to the Trust Fund 2022 -2023

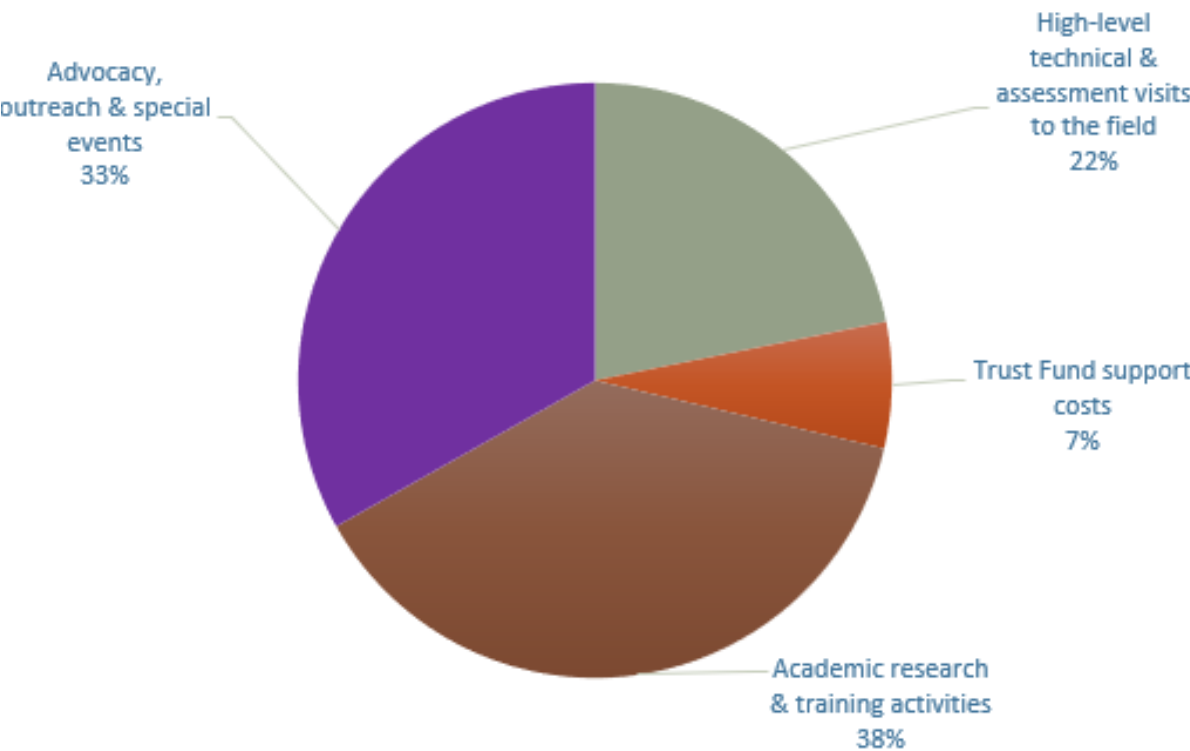
\$5,033,073

Please note that this amount also includes unspent funds from contributions from previous years



Funding Summary

CAAC Trust Fund Expenditure 2022 - 2023





Acknowledgements

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