



India Removed from the Report on Children and Armed Conflict

Why in News?

For Prelims: Report on Children and Armed Conflict, [UN General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#), [Juvenile Justice Act, 2015](#), [Protection of Children from Sexual Offences \(POCSO\) Act](#)

For Mains: Steps Taken by the Indian Government to Protect Children, Global Conventions Related to Children and Armed Conflict, Impact of Armed Conflict on Children

First time since 2010, the [United Nations Secretary-General](#) has removed India from the 2023 report on Children and Armed Conflict in view of measures taken by the Indian government to protect children.

- India was **previously accused of recruiting and using boys in armed groups in [Jammu and Kashmir \(J&K\)](#)**. In 2022, a higher number of violations against children were confirmed in J&K.

What is a Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC)?

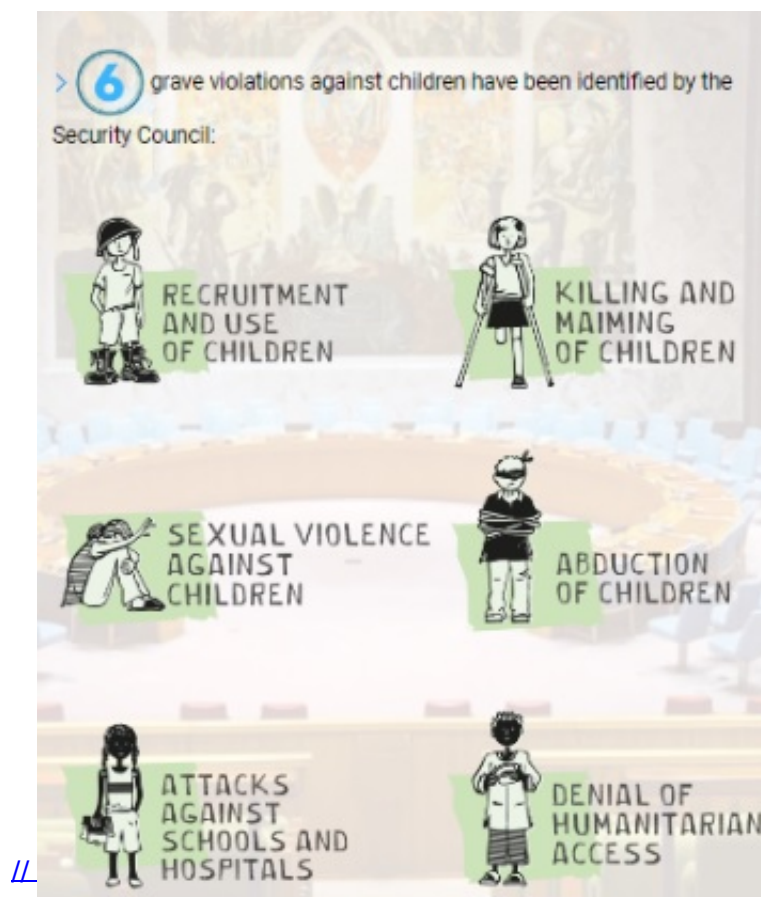
- Background:**
 - 25 years ago, in December 1996, the [UN General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) took the unprecedented decision to create a mandate to protect children from hostilities and **adopted resolution 51/77 which created the CAAC mandate.**
 - 51/77 resolution recommended that the Secretary-General appoint for a period of three years, a Special Representative on the impact of armed conflict on children.**
- Objective:**
 - Strengthen the **protection of children affected by armed conflict**, raised awareness, promote the collection of information about the plight of children affected by war and foster international cooperation to improve their protection.
 - The report also **mentioned the detention, killing, and injuring of children by security forces.**
- Recent Observation:**
 - Among the various types of violations, **the highest numbers were reported for** the killing of 2,985 children and the maiming (wound or injured) of 5,655 children, totaling 8,631 affected children.
 - This was followed by the recruitment and use of 7,622 children and the abduction of 3,985 children. Additionally, **children were detained either for their actual or alleged association with armed groups** (2,496), including those recognised as terrorist groups by the UN or for reasons related to national security.
 - Countries **recording the highest number of violations were** the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Israel, the State of Palestine, Somalia, Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and

What are the Steps Taken by the Indian Government to Protect Children?

- In J&K, **many systems were lacking or ineffective in the past** including the [Juvenile Justice Act, 2015](#) was not enforced, and **the juvenile homes in India were not operating effectively.**
 - However, **measures have been taken to address these issues, including the establishment of infrastructure such as Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, and [Child Care Homes](#) under the JJ Act, 2015.**
- Several measures recommended by the UN have **already been implemented or are currently underway in India.** Training programs for security forces on protecting children have been conducted, and the use of pellet guns has been suspended.
 - Additionally, the **Juvenile Justice Act and the [Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses \(POCSO\) Act, 2012](#) are being actively enforced.**
- The implementation of **legal and administrative frameworks for safeguarding children and the improved accessibility to child protection services** in Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha, and J&K **were also appreciated by the UNGA.**
 - Furthermore, **progress was acknowledged in establishing a J&K Commission for the Protection of Child Rights.**

What are the Related Global Conventions?

- The recruitment or use of children below the age of 15 as soldiers is prohibited by both the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)** and the additional **protocols to the [Geneva Conventions](#).**
 - The CRC **says childhood is separate from adulthood, and lasts until 18; it is a special, protected time, in which children must be allowed to grow, learn, play, develop and flourish with dignity.**
 - The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols form the core of international humanitarian law, which **regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects.** They protect **people not taking part in hostilities and those who are no longer doing so.**
- The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict further **prohibits kids under the age 18 from being compulsorily recruited into state or non-state armed forces** or directly engaging in hostilities.
 - Optional Protocols to human rights **treaties are treaties in their own right, and are open to signature, accession or ratification by countries who are party to the main treaty.**
- Recruiting Child Soldiers is also **considered a war crime under the Rome Statute of the [International Criminal Court \(ICC\)](#).**
- Also, the UN has **identified the recruitment and use of child soldiers as among six “grave violations”.** **Other Five violations are:**



Note:

- India is a party to the **CRC** and **acceded to Optional Protocol in November 2005**. The Constitution encompasses **most rights included in the CRC** as **Fundamental Rights** and **Directive Principles of State Policy (DPSP)**.
 - Article 39 (f)** states that **children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner** and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.
- The **Indian Penal Code (IPC)** **criminalises the recruitment or use in hostilities of persons under-18 years** by state armed forces or non-state armed groups.
- Adults of age over 18 years **are recruited in the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)**.

What is the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children?

- Killing and Maiming:** Children are often directly targeted in conflicts, resulting in the loss of life and severe injuries. This **includes incidents of intentional killing and acts of violence** that cause physical harm or disabilities.
- Recruitment and Use:** Armed groups exploit children by forcibly recruiting or coercing them into participating in hostilities. Children **may be used as combatants, messengers, spies, or for other support roles**.
- Abduction and Forced Displacement:** Children are frequently subjected to abduction, where they are forcefully taken away from their families. **Armed conflicts also lead to mass displacement**, forcing children to flee their homes, schools, and communities, often experiencing trauma and separation from their families.
- Sexual Violence and Exploitation:** Conflict situations increase the risk of **sexual violence and exploitation of children**. They become **vulnerable to rape, forced prostitution, trafficking, and other forms of abuse**.

- **Psychosocial Impact:** Children affected by armed conflict often experience severe psychological distress, including **post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**, anxiety, depression, and emotional trauma, due to exposure to violence, loss of loved ones, and the disruption of their lives.
- **Denial of Humanitarian Access:** In many conflict-affected areas, children face limited or no access to life-saving assistance, including food, clean water, healthcare, and shelter.
 - This denial of humanitarian access worsens their vulnerability. It also **hampers efforts to provide essential services and support for their well-being and development.**

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