FORUM: HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL
QUESTION OF: Measures to Prevent the Recruitment of Child Soldiers in the Central African Republic
MAIN-SUBMITTER: United Kingdom
CO-SUBMITTERS: Angola, Benin, China, Czechia, Egypt, Estonia, Ethiopia, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Spain

THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL,

Deeply concerned that between 6,000 and 10,000 children have been associated with armed groups in the Central African Republic since 2013, serving as combatants, cooks, porters, messengers, guards and forced wives,

Acknowledging the work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), UNICEF and humanitarian partners in securing the release, family tracing and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups,

Noting with appreciation the cooperation between the Government of the Central African Republic, the National Council on Child Protection and United Nations child protection actors in preparing a national plan for the prevention of grave violations against children,

1. Calls for the establishment of a comprehensive Child Protection and Education Initiative in the Central African Republic (CAR), in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNCEF), local authorities, and relevant humanitarian organizations, to address the social and economic factors that increase children's vulnerability to recruitment by armed groups through:
    a) Expanding educational access for children in conflict-affected and displaced communities by:
        i. Establishing temporary learning centres at least twelve months in displacement camps and remote rural communities where schools have been destroyed, closed, or became inaccessible due to armed conflict, ensuring that displaced children can continue their education,

ii. Providing free educational materials, including textbooks, stationery, and basic learning equipment, to children from economically disadvantaged families,
iii. Introducing school meal programs and targeted financial assistance to reduce the economic pressures that may prevent children from attending school and increase their vulnerability to recruitment,

b) Strengthening community-based child-protection systems and securing the resources necessary for their implementation by:
   i. Training local child-protection workers, teachers, and community representatives to recognize early signs of recruitment and exploitation by armed groups,
   ii. Establishing confidential and accessible reporting mechanisms that protect the identities and safety of children, families, and community members reporting suspected recruitment activities,
   iii. Encouraging voluntary financial and technical contributions from Member States and relevant international organizations to support educational facilities, child-protection personnel, and essential learning resources,

c) Supporting community-based prevention initiatives that provide children and families with alternative to recruitment by:
   i. Establishing youth leadership programs that encourage children's participation in constructive educational, social, and community activities,
   ii. Providing parenting support programs to help families recognize recruitment risks and strengthen their ability to protect vulnerable children,
   iii. Supporting community alert networks, women's associations, and local peace committees to monitor suspected recruitment activities and facilitate the reporting and protection of children at risk;

2. Strongly urges the development of a sustainable Child Reintegration and Recovery Program, in cooperation with UNICEF, local authorities, and humanitarian organizations, to support survived children under recruitment with compensation treatment by:

a) Requesting international mental health organization such as The Kids Mental Health Foundation, Child Mind Institute, and the Young Minds Organization to provide mental support and extra daily attention through ways after reintegration period such as but not limited to,
    i. Offering psychological counselling and appropriate therapy assistance to cure mental consequences of their involvement in armed wars,
    ii. Organizing family reunion services, to promote familial healing against child drama, prioritizing the safety of each child throughout the process,
    iii. Ensure access to formal education and age-suitable training programs to help children develop practical skills for their future life,
    iv. Offering safe, temporary shelters for children when family reunification is not possible or appropriate,
b) Promoting safe and sustainable physical and financial support in ways such as:
    i. Provide trauma-verification programs to address the children veterans with monthly financial funding,
    ii. Establishing long-term and support systems, with regular follow-up by trained children personnel therapists, to monitor children's wellbeing and provide in-time support;

3. Calls for a Regional Cooperation and accountability framework involving the Central African Republic, neighboring states, the United Nations, and relevant international organizations to prevent cross-border recruitment and use of children and hold perpetrator accountable through:
    a) Strengthening regional monitoring and information-sharing mechanisms to prevent cross-border recruitment by:
        i. Encouraging the designation of child-protection representatives by participating states to coordinate information-sharing and regional responses to suspected cross-border recruitment activities,
        ii. Supporting regular communication between national authorities, relevant law enforcement agencies, and humanitarian organizations to identify and respond to recruitment networks operating across national borders,

iii. Strengthening cooperation with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to monitor grave violations against children and support existing child-protection activities,

b) Strengthening legal cooperation, investigation, and accountability for individuals responsible for recruiting and exploiting children by:
   i. Encouraging the investigation and prosecution of individuals responsible for child recruitment in accordance with applicable national and international law,
   ii. Ensuring that children associated with armed groups are treated primarily as victims requiring protection,
   iii. Promoting judicial cooperation and information-sharing between the Central African Republic and neighboring states to prevent suspected perpetrators from avoiding accountability across national borders,
   iv. Encouraging relevant international organizations to provide technical assistance, legal expertise, and institutional support to strengthen child-protection legislation and train investigators and prosecutors;

4. Recommends that member states, humanitarian organizations and NGOs to raise public awareness of the dangers of recruiting and using children in armed conflict through public voices, using the following measures:
   a) Conducting public awareness campaigns targeting both younger and elder generations in order to maximize the comprehension of audience, which highlights the dangers of child recruitment, including:
      i. Flyers and advertisements for local communities,
      ii. Radio and social media campaigns in local languages,
      iii. Government approved news broadcast and magazines,
      iv. Community theater and outreach programs in rural areas,
   b) Engaging cooperation within community leaders, religious institutions, and traditional authorities in prevention efforts by:
      i. Providing training identification and report recruitment activities for local leaders,
      ii. Urging leaders to publicly condemn child recruitment,

c) Establishing effective programs in order to empower children, young people, and families to reduce their vulnerability to recruitment through:
    i. Providing parenting support programs that help families with knowledge and resources to protect their children from recruitment,
    ii. Developing youth leadership programs that offer children and adolescents constructive alternatives to involve in armed groups;

5. Urges the Government of the Central African Republic with Mission in Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and relevant United Nations entities, to strengthen peacekeeping capacity and cooperation with armed-group representatives to prevent and respond to the recruitment of children in armed conflict by:
    a) Improving child-protection training for relevant troop and police contributing countries through:
        i. Integrating the Vancouver Principles into pre-deployment and in-mission training programs,
        ii. Training peacekeeping personnel to identify children under the age of 18 associated with armed groups,
        iii. Ensuring the safe and prompt transfer of identified children to qualified civilian child-protection actors,
    b) Strengthening engagement with armed-group commanders to prevent recruitment and facilitate the release of children through:
        i. Maintaining regular dialogue with armed-group commanders at the prefecture level to communicate the prohibition of child recruitment,
        ii. Encouraging commanders to cooperate with child-protection authorities and facilitate the identification and release of children,
        iii. Supporting accountability for individuals responsible for child recruitment and use, in accordance with applicable national and international law,
    c) Improving the monitoring and verification of reported cases of child recruitment through:
        i. Establishing clear procedures for reporting suspected recruitment cases to MINUSCA and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),

ii. Facilitating access for authorized MINUSCA child-protection personnel to relevant camps and checkpoints, in accordance with MINUSCA's mandate and applicable agreements,
iii. Ensuring that reported cases are promptly investigated and that identified children are referred to appropriate civilian protection and reintegration services;

6. Recommends that the Government of the CAR adopt, finance, and publish, within twelve months, a National Plan for the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Children, coordinated by the National Council on Child Protection, which should:

a) Establish a unified age-verification system that requires official documentation at all recruitment points, including but not limited to:
   i. The Armed Forces and the internal security forces,
   ii. Community self-defence groups and militia checkpoints,
   iii. Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration sites where child-protection specialists should conduct mandatory age screenings and transfer any individuals identified as being under the age of 18 to civilian child-protection services,
b) Create a confidential registry of children released from armed groups and children assessed to be at risk, protected by:
   i. Access restricted to designated child protection actors,
   ii. Penalties for unauthorized disclosure of registry information to military or security entities,
   iii. The use of unique identifiers and the secure storage of biometric data under strict data-protection mechanisms,
c) Publish quarterly reports on:
   i. The number of children released from armed groups and the progress of family reunification efforts,
   ii. Cases of re-recruitment and legal action taken against recruiters, including prosecutions initiated and their outcomes,
d) Collaborate with United Nations (UN) agencies, such as UNICEF, to provide technical guidance for implementing this plan, such as but not limited to:
   i. Capacity-building programs for local officials on child protection and age verification,

ii. The exchange of successful practices and lessons learned from other conflict-affected regions;

7. Calls upon relevant authorities and humanitarian partners to ensure that Disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation (DDRR) programs treat children as a distinct and particularly vulnerable group rather than as adult combatants by:

a) Separating children from armed group ranks before the cantonment of adult combatants, including through:
   i. Screening all new arrivals through qualified civilian child-protection personnel,
   ii. Transferring immediately identified children to interim care centres rather than placing them in military custody,
b) Prioritizing the protection and recovery needs of particularly vulnerable children, especially:
   i. Girls who may be overlooked during identification and release processes,
   ii. Children subjected to sexual exploitation or forced marriage,
   iii. Ensuring access to confidential, gender-sensitive, and specialized medical and psychosocial support for these children.