

ACT

to END and PREVENT
VIOLATIONS AGAINST
CHILDREN AFFECTED
by ARMED CONFLICT

Report on
ACTIVITIES SUPPORTED BY
the Contributions to the Trust Fund for
CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT
2020-2021



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



Four pillars to guide the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict



1 PROTECTING children used and abused by, for and in armed conflict

- i. Monitoring and reporting
- ii. Advocating with parties to conflict
- iii. Securing capacity and resources



2 PREVENTING violations committed against children in armed conflict

- iv. Developing prevention plans
- v. Strengthening accountability
- vi. Promoting international commitments



3 RAISING awareness and strengthening partnerships for children

- vii. Providing a space for children to be heard
- viii. Mainstreaming CAAC issues globally
- ix. Strategic communications and key messaging



4 PROMOTING lessons learned and best practices

- x. Strengthening training and research on CAAC
- xi. Advocating for the reintegration of children affected by conflict
- xii. Integrating child protection measures in mediation & peace processes

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Translating Hope into Action: 25 Years to Better Protect Children from the Impact of Conflict

Twenty-five years ago, the United Nations General Assembly took the extraordinary decision to create a mandate to protect children from hostilities and adopted [resolution 51/77](#), which created the Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) mandate. The inception of this mandate brought hope for the protection of millions of conflict-affected children.

A quarter-century of actions and commitments has secured tangible progress for children affected by hostilities: over 170,000 children have been released from armed groups and armed forces following United Nations' advocacy. Thirteen (13) resolutions and multiple Presidential Statements on children and armed conflict have been adopted by the United Nations Security Council. Hundreds of commitments have been undertaken by parties to conflict to end and prevent grave violations against children, including 37 Action Plans, of which, 20 are currently under implementation.

The marking of the 25th anniversary of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate takes place in the context of a changing world that has had to adapt in extraordinary ways over the last two years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. **Of all people suffering from the impact of both conflict and the pandemic, children were the most affected.**

As the Office of the Special Representative and its partners have been responding to some of the biggest challenges of our time, our resilience and inventiveness have been tested. In rebuilding the post COVID-19 world, it is crucial to put the needs of children at the heart of our recovery plans and prioritize their health and well-being for the next 25 years and beyond.

More than ever, translating our commitments for children into tangible actions will be necessary to eradicate grave violations against children. In doing so, we should make sure that our efforts for conflict-affected children continue to focus on **protection, prevention, partnerships, and building resilience**, and that the protection of conflict-affected children remains a central pillar of the human rights, peace and security, peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian agendas.

The **protection** of children is at the core of the children and armed conflict mandate, through the maintaining of a strong monitoring and reporting mechanism on the six grave violations, strengthening engagement with parties to conflict to commit to concrete and time-bound measures to end and prevent violations, promoting child rights and child protection principles and instruments, and securing the necessary resources for child protection capacities on the ground. The protection of children is essential to sustainable peace and security and requires practical engagement to deliver change for children affected by conflict.

Since I began my work in 2017, under the leadership of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the centrality of **prevention** in the work of the United Nations has enabled the Children and Armed Conflict office to expand its engagement with parties to conflict and to broaden its work generally,



making the development of sustainable solutions to better protect children in armed conflict easier to reach. Prevention demands that we be proactive, not solely reactive, and that we aim at breaking cycles of violence that perpetuate grave violations. Important steps have been made in that direction: in recent years, a record number of Action Plans, joint commitments, and command orders have been either signed, issued, or updated with governments and armed groups — many of them including — prevention, and not just protection, measures.

The complexity of today's challenges requires us to work with an increasingly collaborative approach; thankfully, the interconnectivity of our world makes this cooperation easier than ever. The Children and Armed Conflict mandate has always had **partnerships** as its foundation. Member States, the United Nations, international and regional entities, civil society organizations, academia, but also, and most importantly, communities and children affected by conflict, all have a critical role to play both in preventing and addressing child rights violations and in responding to the needs of survivors. We have ever-better means of working together, and we must build on this momentum as the future of — conflict-affected children also depends on our capacity to build meaningful partnerships.

One of the key issues for all partners focusing on ending the use and abuse of children in war should be ensuring that all children victims of grave violations have access to sustainable **reintegration** back into communities. Currently, only a fraction of children released from parties to conflict are fully supported in their reintegration process. All children surviving grave violations have the right to a new life, and it requires that we, the international community, support politically and financially meaningful, long-term, and sustainable reintegration programs that combine health, psycho-social support, education, livelihood activities and more. Not only is reintegration a humanitarian and human rights imperative, but it is also a strategic investment in sustainable peace and in the development of societies.



I would like to express my deep gratitude to all donors to the Trust Fund for Children and Armed Conflict. Your support has enabled my Office and me to implement the mandate in all its aspects and strengthen the protection of children affected by war. Through these contributions, we were able to hire temporary staff to enhance the capacity and expertise of my Office; we were also able to finance, for the first months of 2020, the travel of staff from my Office to support the Country Task Forces on Monitoring and Reporting in the field to develop Action Plans, strengthen public outreach and launch advocacy campaigns; and we significantly enhanced our analysis, assessment, and response to new and emerging trends in violations against children in armed conflict.

I look forward to continuing and intensifying our collaboration in the coming years. Thank you,

Handwritten signature of Virginia Gamba.

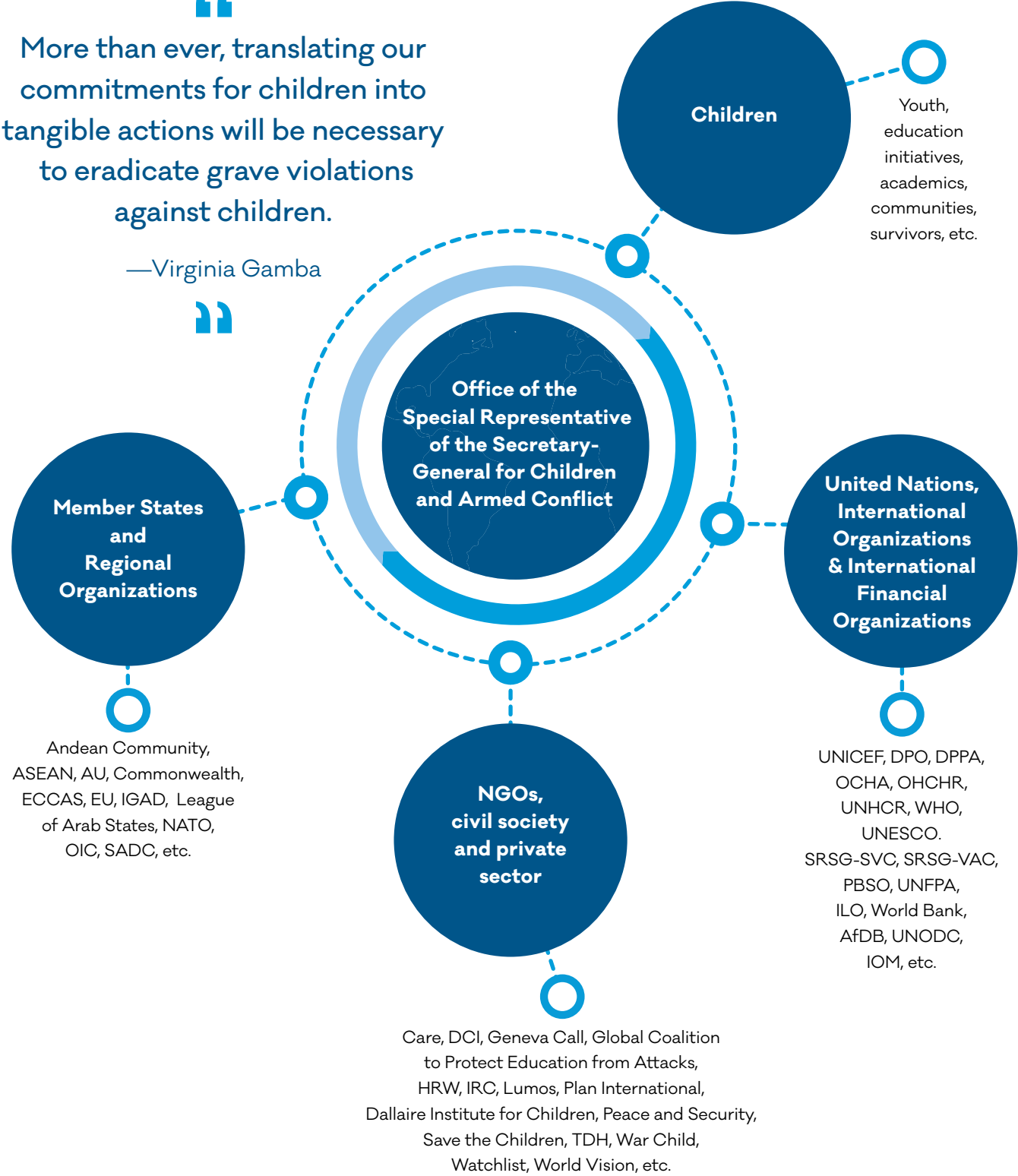
Virginia Gamba
Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Partners of the Children and Armed Conflict Mandate



More than ever, translating our commitments for children into tangible actions will be necessary to eradicate grave violations against children.

—Virginia Gamba



Trust Fund for Children and Armed Conflict

The Trust Fund is critical in supporting the implementation of the mandate of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

For the years 2020-2021, heavily marked by the COVID-19 pandemic and related protection challenges, the trust fund was used for the production of studies and research papers, including a study on the impact of the pandemic on conflict-affected children. As detailed in the coming pages, it also allowed for the timely follow-up on specific

issues, enabled coordination with partners and enhanced communication, as well as enabled staff to accompany the Special Representative on field visits as well as to international high-level events and meetings. Furthermore, the trust fund enabled OSRSG CAAC to upgrade and update its remote conferencing facilities, ensuring continuous efficient work in a safe environment throughout the pandemic.

In 2020-2021, the Special Representative and her team traveled to:

Countries on the agenda:

- ◉ Afghanistan
- ◉ Myanmar
- ◉ South Sudan

Other regions:

- ◉ **Dakar, Senegal** in January 2020 for the regional consultation with country task forces on **West and Central Africa** and **Colombia**;
- ◉ **Addis Ababa, Ethiopia** for a meeting with the **African Union** in January 2020;
- ◉ **Moscow, Russia**, in March 2020 at the invitation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs for a workshop on the repatriation and reintegration of children associated with armed groups;
- ◉ **Libreville, Gabon** for the 7th **African Union** High-Level Seminar on Peace and Security;
- ◉ **Geneva, Switzerland** for a training on the CAAC mandate.

This publication demonstrates how the Trust Fund supported the OSRSG-CAAC in implementing its mandate in 2020-2021, a crucial period leading up to the 25th anniversary of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate. In addition to highlighting protection measures that parties to conflict put in place, in cooperation with the United Nations, to protect conflict-affected children, the report also informs about the global outreach and advocacy efforts of the Special Representative's Office with Member States, regional organizations, and other key stakeholders.

This report illustrates the crucial importance of the Trust Fund. It does not aim to provide an exhaustive list of all activities undertaken by the Special Representative and her Office. More detailed information about the work and activities of OSRSG CAAC is available in the annual report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict to the

Security Council as well as in the annual reports of the Special Representative to the General Assembly and Human Rights Council.

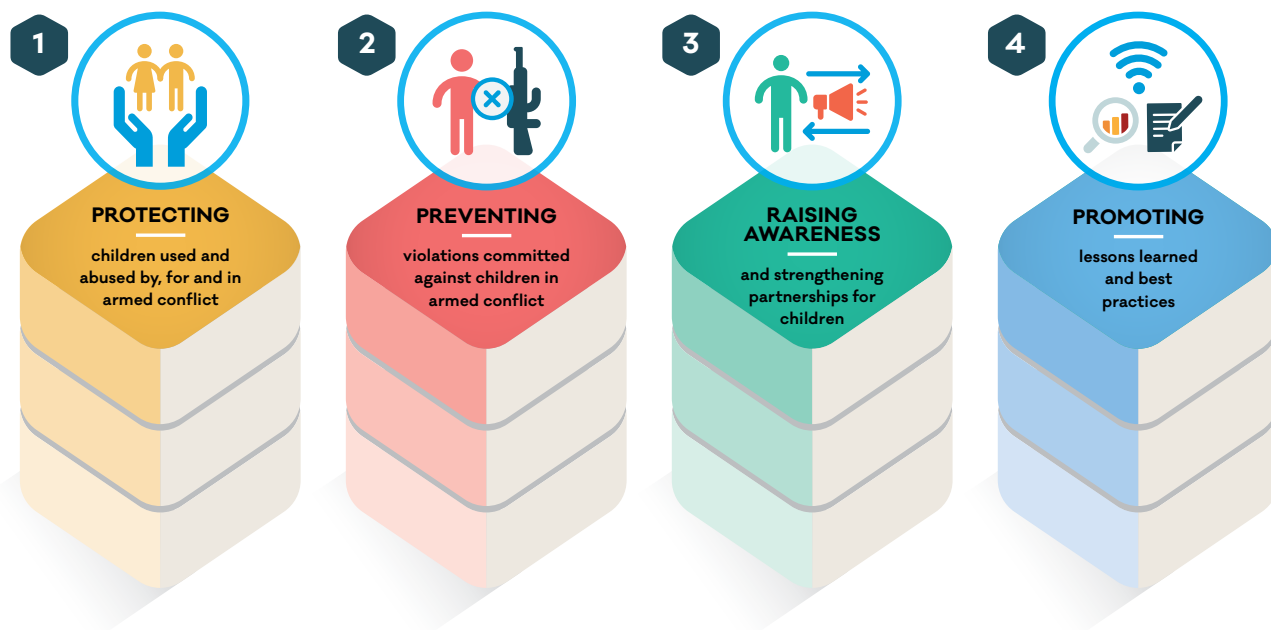
Groups of friends of CAAC are crucial partners and are present in many countries on the CAAC agenda. Here at the launch of the ACT to Protect campaign in Mali in July 2019.

UN Photo / Harandane Dicko



A mandate guided by four pillars

During 2020-2021, the actions of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC) have been guided by the four pillars below.



Sitting at the junction of the human rights, peace and security, peacebuilding, development and humanitarian agendas, the Children and Armed Conflict mandate is one of cooperation and has strong links to other thematic agendas such as Youth, Peace and Security, the Protection of Civilians and the Women, Peace and Security. Recognizing those links and building bridges between different agendas is fundamental to success.

At the same time, maintaining the specificity of the Children and Armed Conflict mandate, as a topic in its own right, is equally important. The Children and Armed Conflict mandate fosters unique collaboration within the United Nations family between a broad range of entities, as well as with outside actors including Member States, regional and sub-regional organizations, civil society partners and academia, among others. Finally, it also provides crucial input to the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in support of the agenda 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals in support of the Agenda 2030

These goals are particularly relevant for the Children and Armed Conflict mandate

	Goal 1: No Poverty		Goal 5: Gender Equality		Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
	Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being		Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth		
	Goal 4: Quality Education		Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities		





PILLAR 1: Protecting children used and abused by, for and in armed conflict

i. MONITORING & REPORTING

ii. ADVOCATING WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT

iii. SECURING CAPACITY & RESOURCES

i. MONITORING AND REPORTING

Enhance the UN Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on violations against children by increasing engagement with Country Task Forces, improving gender- and age-disaggregated data, including IDP and refugee children, and identifying new and emerging trends of violations against children

ii. ADVOCATING WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT

Engage in direct advocacy with parties to conflict to end and prevent violations, including through field missions and dialogue on Action Plans

iii. SECURING CAPACITY AND RESOURCES

Ensure and advocate for sufficient dedicated child protection advisors in the UN and partner organizations as well as accompanying resources for child protection activities

Pillar 1 Achievements for 2020-2021

- Over **12,640 children were released** from armed forces and groups in 2020 and thousands more in 2021; while many benefited from reintegration programs, some unfortunately did not because of a lack of financial resources.
- In 2020 alone, at least **35 new commitments** by parties to conflict such as command orders, roadmaps or updated workplans, mitigation measures during military operations or Action Plans, were adopted.
 - » **Three new Action Plans** were signed with armed groups: in **Myanmar**, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army signed in November 2020 a joint Action Plan with the United Nations to end and prevent recruitment and use of children, the first armed group in Myanmar to do so. In **Mali**, the *Platform*, a coalition of armed movements signatory to the *Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali*, signed in August 2021, two Actions Plans addressing child recruitment and use and other grave violations.
 - » In **Yemen**, dialogue continued between the Houthis and the United Nations to develop an Action Plan to end and prevent grave violations against children.
 - » In **Iraq**, dialogue continued with the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) on the development of an Action Plan to end and prevent grave violations.
 - » In February 2020, a Comprehensive **Action Plan was signed with the Government of South Sudan** to End and Prevent All Grave Violations against Children and included all parties to the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan. The Action Plan is also binding on any armed group that may integrate into the South Sudan People's Defence Forces in the future.
 - » **Endorsement by the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen of the program of time-bound activities** in January 2020, as part of the implementation of the memorandum of understanding.
 - » In December 2020, **the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)** and the United Nations agreed to a **roadmap to accelerate the implementation of the joint Action Plan**.
 - » In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the commanders of **six armed groups and factions signed unilateral commitments** to end and prevent child recruitment and use and the other grave violations.

- A **regional workshop** with country task forces on monitoring and reporting, and country teams in **West and Central Africa, and Colombia**, was organized in January 2020 in Dakar by the Special Representative and UNICEF, with the support of the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, to foster exchanges and share lessons learned on the implementation of the CAAC mandate, including the monitoring and reporting mechanism and on the engagement of the United Nations with parties to conflict.

- Despite the **COVID-19 pandemic** and related challenges and public health measures, **engagement with parties to conflict continued** through virtual meetings and consultations:

- » **Consultations with Israeli and Palestinian** parties to examine the cases of maiming and injuries caused by Israeli forces and of the recruitment and use of children by armed Palestinian groups.
- » During 2021, consultations were held between the United Nations and the **Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad (Mali)** to identify progress and challenges for the implementation of the 2017 Action Plan and agree on the way forward. In August 2021 priority activities were identified to be implemented by the CMA within a short chronogram.
- » Several consultations were held between the Special Representative, her Office and the **Coalition to Support**

Legitimacy in Yemen to identify remaining priorities for the full implementation of the programme of activities, including with the Force Commander of the Joint Forces of the Coalition.

- » Continued United Nations dialogue with **armed groups in the Central African Republic** led to the release of children from the armed groups ranks during the second half of 2021.

- Furthermore, OSRSG CAAC worked with child protection partners to mitigate the adverse effects of the pandemic on conflict-affected children and ensure greater protection for them.

- » The Office of the Special Representative supported the country task force on monitoring and reporting in **Colombia** and delivered **virtual capacity-building training to child protection organizations** to strengthen existing monitoring and reporting capacities on grave violations against children.
- » In the **Philippines**, OSRSG CAAC contributed to the **high-level and technical workshops** organized by the CTFMR to identify ways to enhance the contribution of United Nations agencies to the monitoring and reporting mechanism, but also to the implementation of the Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Law (CSAC Law or Republic Act 11188), milestone legislation translating UN SC resolutions into domestic law.



Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, at the opening of the Child Protection Unit of the SSPDF in Juba, South Sudan.

PHOTO: OSRSG-CAAC / Susanne Hefekaeuser



PILLAR 2: Preventing violations committed against children in armed conflict

iv. DEVELOPING PREVENTION PLANS

Support the development of prevention plans at national, sub-regional and regional level

v. STRENGTHENING ACCOUNTABILITY

Promote international, regional and national norms and policies on accountability and justice for children victims of violations

vi. PROMOTING INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS

Promote ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) and endorsement of the Paris Principles and Commitments, the Vancouver Principles and the Safe Schools Declaration

Pillar 2 Achievements for 2020-2021

○ The Special Representative has continued to increase her engagement and **cooperation with regional and sub-regional organizations**. To name but a few:

- » In July 2021, the Special Representative, together with the **League of Arab States** and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, organized a virtual event to discuss the protection of conflict-affected children in the Arab region.
- » In December 2021, OSRSG CAAC presented the mediation guidance on child protection to Ambassadors of the **Arab network of women mediators**.
- » OSRSG CAAC continued to participate in the **African Union Coordination Group on Children in Situations of Conflict** composed of African Union and United Nations entities and non-governmental organizations.

○ The **Europe Liaison CAAC Office in Brussels** continued to strengthen **engagement with European partners**, including the European Union and the UN offices and partners in Geneva, Vienna and Paris, as well as civil society organizations based in Europe.

» The Special Representative met with multiple **European Union officials**, including the Commissioner for International Partnerships, the Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management, the European Commission's Vice-President for Democracy and Demography as well as with several Members of the European Parliament.

» In January 2020, her liaison office in Brussels provided **training to the members of the Geneva-based Group of Friends** of Children and Armed Conflict.

» In March 2021, a representative from the Special Representative's **Europe Liaison Office** spoke at an event on children and armed conflict organized in Brussels by Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Greece, Luxembourg, and Romania.

○ In the **Philippines**, the Government and the United Nations developed a strategic plan, adopted in June 2021, to end and prevent violations against children by the armed forces. It is the **first national plan to realize the prevention aspects** of Security Council resolution 2427 (2018).

Furthermore, the Special Representative has engaged with other countries, including the Central African Republic, Mali, India, Pakistan, and Sudan, on the development of **preventive measures** to protect children.

In **Colombia**, the Government approved in July 2020 a **national plan of action** to implement a policy, issued in November 2019, to prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children, and launched the programme “*Súmate por mí*” to prevent child recruitment and use by armed groups. In January 2021, the Government announced the start of a strategy for the local implementation of the policy to prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children.

A **training and high-level workshop** on child protection were conducted in March and May 2021 by the Office of the Special Representative with the **Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen**.

In September 2020, the Special Representative was a briefer at a **Security Council Open Debate** convened by Niger on the subject “**Attacks against schools as a grave violation of children’s rights**”. During the reporting period, she further briefed the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1591 (2005) concerning the Sudan as well as the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2140 (2014) concerning Yemen.

The **International Labour Organization’s Convention No. 182** on the worst forms of child labour *achieved universal ratification in 2020*. The Office continued its cooperation with the ILO and partners, especially regarding the Alliance 8.7 initiative to eliminate the worst forms of child labour, and pledged to

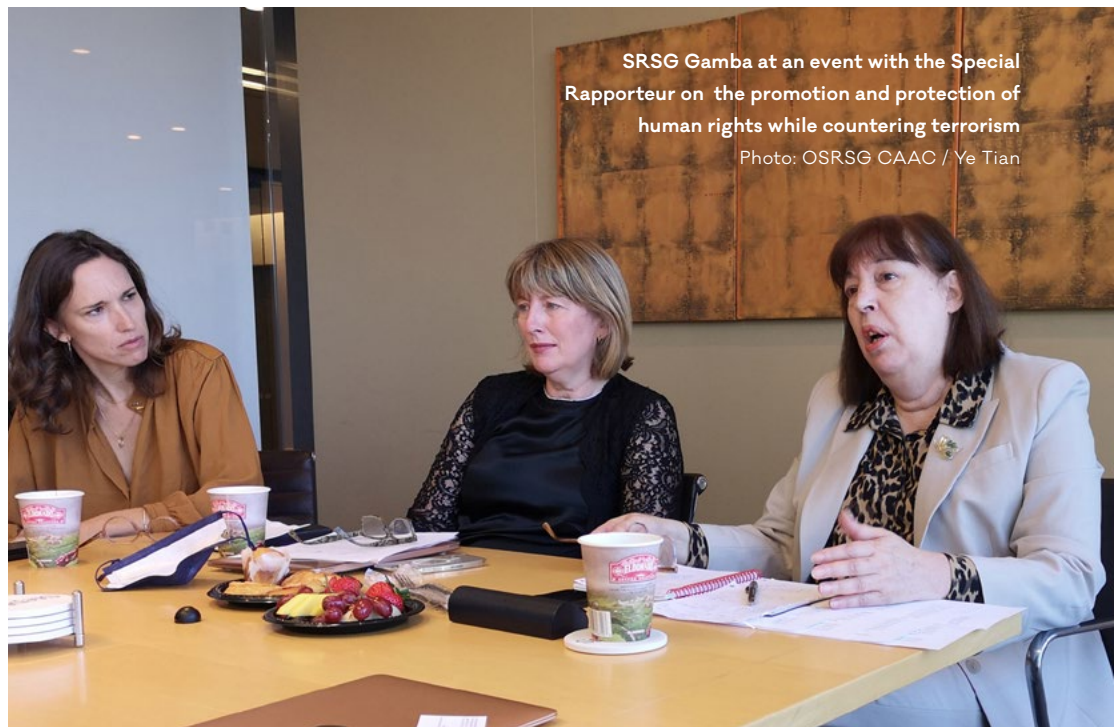
take concrete actions such as promoting the ratification of OPAC to ending child labour.

The **Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict** has been ratified by 172 states — including most recently by Suriname and Fiji — a subject for which the Special Representative tirelessly advocates.

The **Paris Principles and Commitments** on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups have been endorsed by 112 States. OSRSG CAAC co-organized a high-level event with Jordan, France, the European Union, UNICEF and Save the Children to announce Jordan’s endorsement of the Paris Principles.

The **Vancouver Principles** on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers’ have been endorsed by 105 States. The Special Representative participated in an event to support these Principles and advocated to Governments for their adoption.

The **Safe Schools Declaration** has been endorsed by 112 States and has formed the basis for events at which the SRSRSG has spoken, as well as facilitated the recent adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution to prevent attacks on education.



SRSG Gamba at an event with the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights while countering terrorism
Photo: OSRSG CAAC / Ye Tian



PILLAR 3:
**Raising awareness
 and strengthening
 partnerships for
 children**

vii. PROVIDING A SPACE FOR CHILDREN TO BE HEARD

Raise awareness on violations against children and ensure the voices of children affected by armed conflict, including those displaced, are heard at the highest levels

viii. MAINSTREAMING CAAC ISSUES GLOBALLY

Organize and participate in seminars, conferences and other relevant events to raise awareness about the issue of children affected by conflict

ix. STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND KEY MESSAGING

Strengthen advocacy and messaging on violations against children, including through campaigns, liaising with partners and bringing global attention to emerging trends in child rights violations

Pillar 3

Achievements for 2020-2021

⦿ The campaign **ACT to Protect Children Affected by Conflict** was launched in South Sudan in February 2020, the seventh launch since the beginning of the campaign in 2019. To mark the second anniversary of the campaign in April 2021, an Instagram account was created to widen the online reach of OSRSG CAAC. Furthermore, campaign materials were made available in all six United Nations languages (including Chinese and Russian) and the hashtag **#ACTtoProtect** was widely used.

⦿ 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. She participated in multiple virtual events organized by OSRSG CAAC or partners of the children and armed conflict mandate, including Member States, United Nations entities and civil society organizations. Inter alia, the Special Representative and/or her office:



» Was a speaker in September 2020 and 2021 at a virtual High-level event to commemorate the **International Day to Protect Education from Attack**, co-organized with Qatar, the Education Above All Foundation, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UNICEF.

» Participated in an online event on **justice for all survivors of conflict-related sexual violence**, organized by the All-Survivors Project, together with Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland, and the International Human Rights Clinic of Harvard Law School in October 2020.

- » Was the keynote speaker at a conference entitled **“Giving hope to girl children in armed conflict: a joint commitment from the academic community”**, organized by the University of Perugia, the Institute of Political Studies S. Pio V and the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in November 2020.
- » Was a keynote speaker at the Arria Formula meeting **“Children and Armed Conflict, Repatriation of Children from Conflict Zones: From Camps to Homes, Call for Action”**, co-organized with the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan in January 2021.
- » Took part in a **policy workshop on children and armed conflict** organized by the Watchlist on children and armed conflict and the Institute for International Humanitarian Affairs at Fordham University in January 2021.
- » Was a speaker at a virtual high-level event on the **“Protection of Children: Invisible victims of armed conflict and the COVID-19 pandemic”**, organized by Belgium, Niger, the European Union, and Save the Children.
- » Was a speaker at a virtual event entitled **“Violence against girl children in armed conflicts and the role of the international criminal justice system”**, co-organized by Italy and El Salvador and co-sponsored by Sierra Leone, Liechtenstein, and Luxembourg as part of the Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021.
- » Was a speaker at the **Arria Formula meeting on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on grave violations against conflict-affected children**, co-organized by OSRSG CAAC and Estonia together with fourteen Government co-sponsors in May 2021.
- » Was a keynote speaker at the **Fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration** held in Abuja and virtually in October 2021, and hosted by the Government of Nigeria, together with the Governments of Argentina, Norway, Spain, as well as the African Union Commission and the Global Coalition to Protect Education From Attack.
- » Delivered the opening remarks at the **opening of the Autumn School on Building competencies and awareness on the international protection of children, particularly girls, affected by armed conflict**, organized by the Universities Network on Children in Armed Conflicts.
- » Provided a video message in November 2021 for the launch of the **“Call to action to ensure the rights and wellbeing of children born of sexual violence in conflict”**, organized by the United Kingdom.
- » Was a keynote speaker at the **UN Security Council Arria Formula meeting: Protection of Education in Conflict**, co-sponsored by Norway and Niger in December 2021.



Somali singers perform during a ceremony to mark the International Day of the African Child held in Mogadishu.

AMISOM Photo

● **Briefing to the UN Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict** on specific country situations and other issues such as the impact of the pandemic on conflict-affected children. OSRSG CAAC further co-organized, with the Chair of the Working Group, induction sessions on the CAAC mandate for experts of new non-permanent members of the Security Council, as well as in-depth briefings on CAAC for new experts.

- In 2020-2021, OSRSG CAAC became a **member** of:
- » **UN Action**, a network of 20 UN entities united with the goal of ending sexual violence during and in the wake of armed conflict in January 2020.
 - » **Alliance 8.7** in April 2021.
 - » The **Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) Working Group** in July 2021.

● **Groups of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict** continue to be crucial partners supporting the mandate. In 2020 and 2021, the Special Representative virtually briefed the Groups of Friends of CAAC in Afghanistan, Somalia, Yemen, New York, and Geneva.

● OSRSG CAAC joined other United Nations partners to make a submission (**amicus curiae**) in the **reparations phase of the case The Prosecutor vs. Domenic Ongwen** pursuant to the Decision of the Trial Chamber IX of the International Criminal Court.

● As a member of the United Nations inter-agency task force on the **global study on children deprived of liberty**, the Special Representative remained committed to supporting the follow-up to the recommendations of this study. Her Office contributed to the development of a United Nations Common Position on Incarceration and the drafting of advocacy messages for the protection of children deprived of liberty in situations of armed conflict.

● The Special Representative and her Office continued to have regular **interactions and meetings with civil society organizations**, including in New York, Geneva, and Brussels, among others, as well as during her field missions, including to Myanmar and South Sudan.





Mariam, a 15-year-old member of the National Children's Parliament of Mali, addresses Security Council members during the Open Debate in connection with Children in Armed Conflict, June 2020.

- ⦿ OSRSG-CAAC promoted the voices of conflict-affected children:
 - » **Mariam, from Mali**, at the Open Debate on CAAC in June 2020.
 - » The **Children Manifesto** written by 300 children with support from Save the Children.
 - » **Voices from the field** on the CAAC website giving a voice to conflict-affected children with support from civil society partners such as War Child and the Whitaker Peace and Development Initiative.
 - » The **Nairobi Process** led by former child soldiers and/or children affected by armed conflict, for which OSRSG CAAC is a guarantor, which aims to provide them with a new platform for discussion and advocacy and to present their ideas and recommendations to decision-makers.

- ⦿ In December 2020, the Special Representative received the **Sapientza Human Rights Award 2020** on behalf of the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, *"for its irreplaceable actions carried out in order to promote the fundamental rights of boys and girls in situations of armed conflict."*
- ⦿ In December 2021, the Special Representative was awarded the **Universities Network for Children and Armed Conflict 2021 International Award** on behalf of the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict *"for extraordinary dedication to the protection of children in situations of armed conflict."*



PILLAR 4:
Promoting
Lessons Learned
and Best Practices

x.
STRENGTHENING
TRAINING AND
RESEARCH ON
CAAC

xi.
ADVOCATING FOR
THE REINTEGRATION
OF CHILDREN
AFFECTED BY
CONFLICT

xii.
INTEGRATING
CHILD PROTECTION
MEASURES IN
MEDIATION & PEACE
PROCESSES

x. STRENGTHENING TRAINING AND RESEARCH ON CAAC

Support the development of training curricula and related tools on violations against children; support research on CAAC issues including the detention of children for their association with parties to conflict, abduction, as well as the nexus between child protection, prevention, peacebuilding and development

xi. ADVOCATING FOR THE REINTEGRATION OF CHILDREN AFFECTED BY CONFLICT

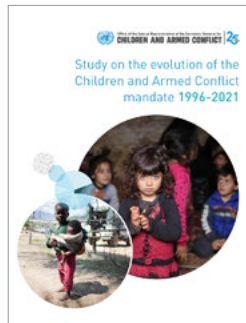
Promote concerted action to improve reintegration and rehabilitation efforts through the Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers and sustainable and long-term programming

xii. INTEGRATING CHILD PROTECTION MEASURES IN MEDIATION & PEACE PROCESSES

Develop a practical guidance on the integration of child protection issues into peace processes.

Pillar 4 Achievements for 2020-2021

○ To mark the **25th anniversary** of the inception of the mandate, the Special Representative launched a study to analyze its evolution and how it has been implemented since its establishment in 1996. The **Study on the Evolution of the Children and Armed Conflict Mandate 1996-2021** was launched in January 2022 during a high-level event marking the 25th anniversary of the CAAC mandate, co-sponsored by Norway.



○ Publication of the study **Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on violations against children in situations of armed conflict** in April 2021. Upon request from Member States, the Office is conducting a follow-up study on the mid- and long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on conflict-affected children.



○ Research and development of a **study on the gender dimension of grave violations against children in armed conflict**, which will be published in 2022.

○ Research and development of a **study on the impact of grave violations against children on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which will be published in 2022.

○ Publication of the **report consolidating the recommendations from the Regional Consultations on Children and Armed Conflict** that were co-organized by OSRSG CAAC and UNICEF from 2018 to 2020 covering the Middle East and North African region, East Africa and African Great Lakes region, South and Southeast Asia, West and Central Africa, and Colombia.





Regional consultation with country task forces in West and Central Africa and Colombia.

Photo: UNICEF/Gunter Boussey

- ⦿ The **Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict**, launched in February 2020 at the Security Council in the presence of the King



and the Queen of Belgium and the Secretary-General, is now available in all six UN languages. Furthermore, in December 2021, OSRSG CAAC delivered a capacity-building module to a League of Arab States-organized event for high-level mediators from the Arab region, briefing on child protection in mediation processes, using the guidance.

- ⦿ The Special Representative continued to spearhead the **Global Coalition for Reintegration of Child Soldiers**, launched in 2018 together with UNICEF, which gathers a broad, geographically representative group of Member States, United Nations entities, the World Bank, non-governmental organizations, and academia.

» The Global Coalition published in 2020 **three briefing papers**:

- *Reframing Child Reintegration: From Humanitarian Action to Development, Prevention, Peacebuilding and Beyond*
- *Gaps and Needs of Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups' Successful Reintegration*
- *Financing support for child reintegration*

A summary of the findings of the three reports was also published. A high-level launch of the briefing papers took place in July 2021.



- » As part of the second phase of this initiative, an **Academic Advisory Group on Child Reintegration** was established and brings together global academics to identify and research issues to improve child reintegration efforts. Specific aspects of the reintegration studies will be analyzed in greater detail, including the use of innovative financing for reintegration activities, the strengthening of mental health and psychosocial support for separated children, and the differentiated needs of girls and boys in reintegration programmes.
- » The **Financing Innovation Forum**, organized together with the World Bank, will take place in 2022 to look deeper into the financing modalities for reintegration programmes.
- » **The Nairobi Process** was launched in 2021 to solicit the perspectives and advice of children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups. It will culminate in 2022 in the organization of a symposium in Nairobi during which the recommendations from the survivors from several countries will be presented and discussed.

- ⦿ The Special Representative has been working extensively with UNICEF, the Department of Peace Operations and the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs in the framework of the **Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism Technical Reference Group**, co-chaired by the Special Representative and UNICEF, to develop guidance for monitors. A **guidance note on abductions** will be published in 2022.

- ⦿ To further support lessons learned and best practices and outreach activities, OSRSG CAAC established an **Analysis and Outreach hub in Doha, Qatar** that will be operational in 2022.

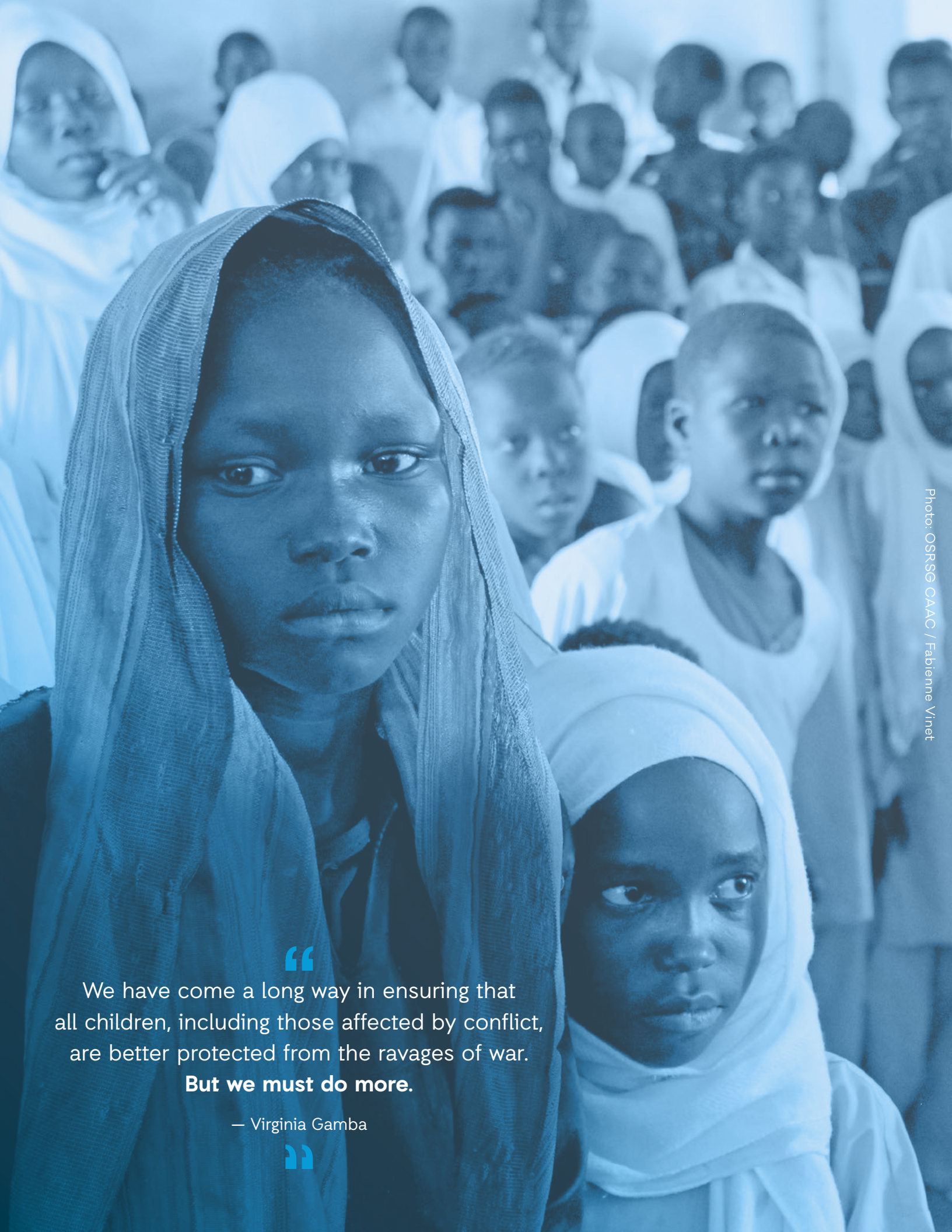


Photo: OSRSO CAAC / Fabienne Vinet

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We have come a long way in ensuring that all children, including those affected by conflict, are better protected from the ravages of war.

But we must do more.

— Virginia Gamba

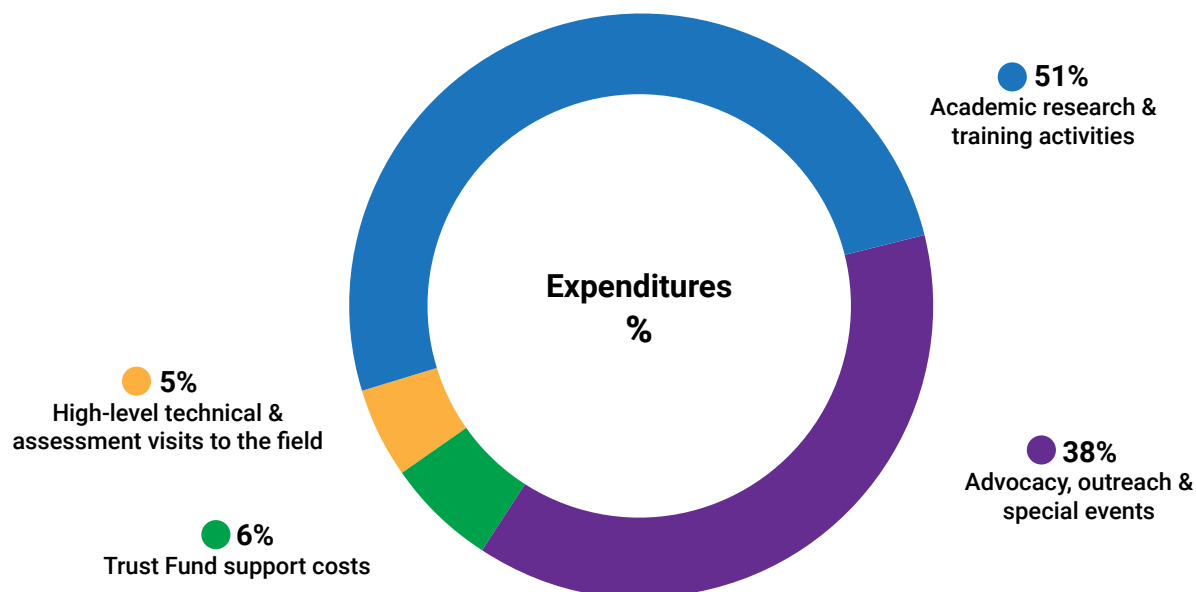
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2020-2021 Children and Armed Conflict Trust Fund Status

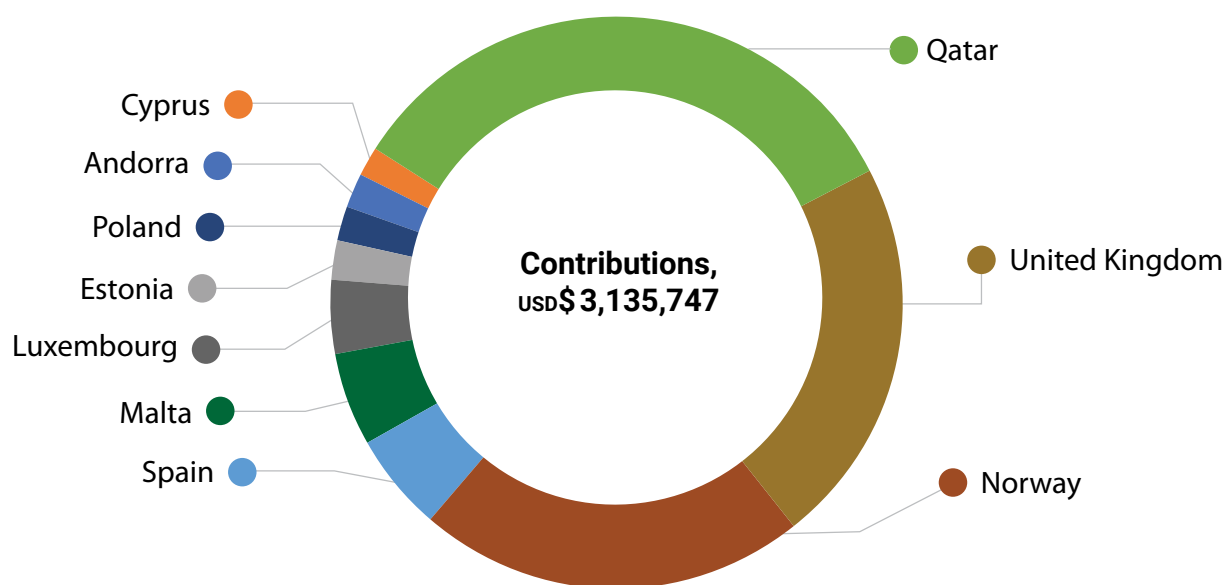
Due to a limit on travel during 2020-2021, there was a marked increase in 'academic research and training activities' and 'advocacy, outreach and special events', as detailed previously in the report.

Trust Fund monies also supported the purchase of teleconferencing equipment that facilitated online meetings, workshops and other outreach and advocacy activities enabling OSRSG CAAC to continue its crucial engagement with partners.

CAAC Trust Fund Expenditure 2020-2021



Contributions to the Trust Fund 2020-2021





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



The Office of the Special Representative
of the Secretary-General for Children
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