

UNPROTECTED

Special Edition: Analysis of funding for child protection in armed conflict in 2021 and 2022

Oslo Conference on Protecting Children in Armed Conflict 5–6 June 2023



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Section 3 on humanitarian forecasting was developed and written by Mike Pearson from Humanitarian Funding Forecast.

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Front cover:
Maher*, 8 is from a village in Ma'rat Nu'man, North West Syria. When Maher* was five years old, his home was hit by shelling and he was injured by shrapnel in his stomach and in his foot. The family was displaced and had to move from one displacement camp to another. They are now living in a camp area in Harm district, Idlib province.

Back cover:
Messi* and his mother. Messi was supported by going to a Child-Friendly Space in Eastern DRC.

SUMMARY

The impact of armed conflict on children is one of the most pressing humanitarian concerns today. A strong humanitarian child protection response is critical to protect children and promote their rights, dignity, and resilience. This requires sustainable, flexible, multi-year funding for child protection within UN-coordinated humanitarian and refugee response plans.

This briefing sets out the latest analysis on financing for child protection in humanitarian response plans (HRPs) and the Bangladesh Joint Response Plan (JRP) for 2021 and 2022. **Section 1** provides an overview of funding across all HRPs and the Bangladesh JRP.

Section 2 focuses on funding trends for conflict-driven HRPs and the Bangladesh JRP specifically. This categorisation is built from markers for types of crisis used by Development Initiatives in its [Global Humanitarian Assistance report](#) for 2022,¹ as well as the [ACAPS Crisis Overview](#).²

Section 3 provides a forecast for child protection funding for conflict-driven HRPs and the Bangladesh JRP that analyses data from 2020 to 2022 to predict the future funding gap for child protection in conflict settings by 2026 if there is no change in the current trajectory.



Girls play outside after their class at Save the Children's Child Friendly Space in a displacement camp in Balkh province, Afghanistan.

1) See Fig 1.1 - People in need, type and severity of crisis, and funding requirements, 2021, and the methodology on coding crisis types described under Methodology and definitions, Chapter 5. <https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2022/>.

2) The following HRPs are not included in the analysis: Burundi, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Zimbabwe 2021.

KEY FINDINGS

ACROSS ALL HRPS AND THE BANGLADESH JRP:

- ❑ **Funding for child protection specific programming continues to increase overall**, reaching more than US\$204 million in 2022.
- ❑ **The main source of funding for child protection in humanitarian settings is bilateral donor governments** (comprising 75% of all child protection funding). The top three donors for 2022 were the USA, Germany, and the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department.
- ❑ **Funding is overwhelmingly channelled through UN agencies and international NGOs**, with only 2% of child protection funding directly received by national and local actors (according to Financial Tracking Service data). Tracking funding that is indirectly received by national and local actors³ remains challenging across sectors.
- ❑ **Child protection is increasingly integrated and mainstreamed in humanitarian action**; however, challenges with tracking mean no breakdown of funding per individual sector is available. It is not possible to know what proportion of funding through the 'multiple sectors bucket' is for child protection, nor the extent that child protection is integrated or mainstreamed.

FOCUS ON CONFLICT-DRIVEN HRPS AND THE BANGLADESH JRP:

- ❑ **While funding for child protection increased in 2021 and 2022, it is not prioritised in humanitarian responses.** Child protection represents on average 2% of the funding requirements of the overall appeal, but receives less than 1% of the appeal's funding.
- ❑ **The numbers of children needing child protection are increasing, but the proportion of humanitarian response funding for child protection is not keeping pace.** The number of children in need of protection services stood at 66 million in 2022; 30% of these children (22.4m) were targeted to receive assistance.

- ❑ **Child protection remains woefully underfunded within overall humanitarian responses.** While the overall appeal is funded at around 60%, child protection in 2021 was only 22% funded before falling even further in 2022 to 19%.
- ❑ **In 2022, 36% of funding for conflict-driven HRPs and the Bangladesh JRP, was directed to Ukraine, Syria and Afghanistan.**⁴ However, relative to their financial requirements, these responses remained poorly funded, receiving less than half of their child protection requirements. Child protection in 2022 was funded at 36% in Ukraine, 15% in Syria and 43% in Afghanistan.
- ❑ **In 2021, 56% of conflict-driven HRPs and the Bangladesh JRP received less than a quarter of the requested amount for child protection.** This situation deteriorated further in 2022 when this figure rose to 67% (16 out of 24 HRPs).

FORECASTING CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING IN CONFLICT SETTINGS:

- ❑ **By 2026, forecasts suggest that there will be a \$1 billion funding gap for child protection funding in conflict settings.** With the funding requirement forecast to climb to \$1.37bn by 2026, this equates to a 78% funding gap: a drastic rise from a funding gap in 2020 of \$325m. In just six years, the funding gap is set to triple.

³) Local and national actors here comprised of civil society organisations and NGOs.

⁴) In dollar terms, this was \$32.2m for Ukraine, \$12.5m for Syria, and \$11m for Afghanistan.



Fatun*, 10, at home in Puntland, Somalia.

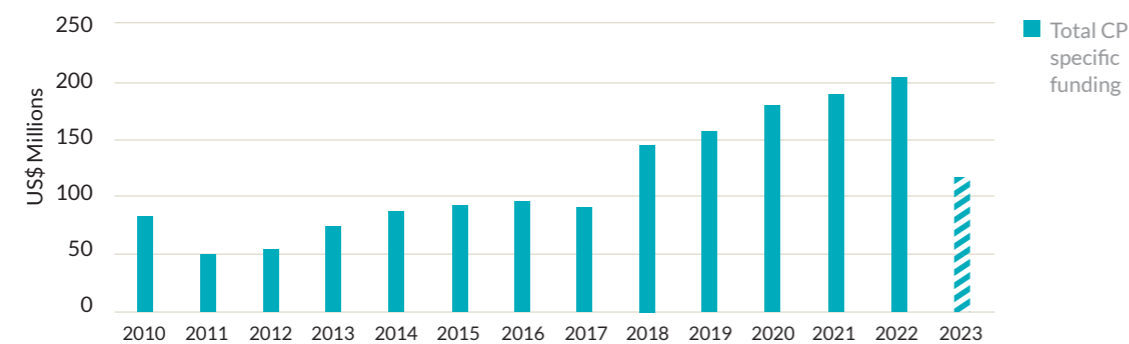
SECTION 1 DIGGING INTO THE DATA: ANALYSIS OF HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR CHILD PROTECTION

This analysis looks at humanitarian funding of child protection reported on the Financial Tracking Service (FTS) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. It provides:

- an overarching analysis of all child protection funding reported on the FTS
- a more specific analysis of conflict-driven crises⁵ that have a HRP or come under the Bangladesh JRP. The data collection and analysis took place in March and April 2023 with data available at that time.⁶

CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING FOR ALL HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANS

FIGURE 1. HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR CHILD PROTECTION SPECIFIC PROGRAMMING 2010–23
(Inside UN-coordinated appeals, including flash appeals, and outside)



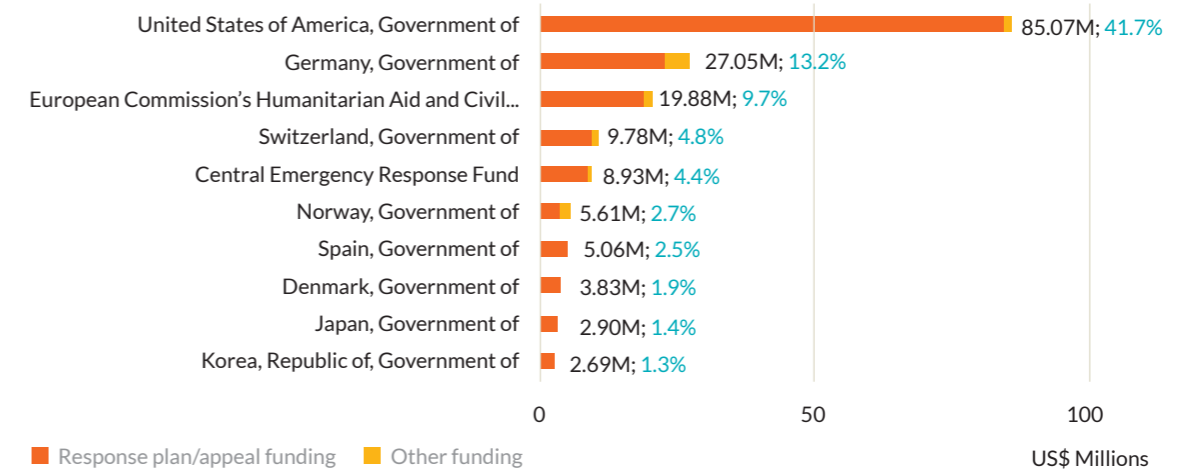
Note: All data is from the UNOCHA FTS. Data from 2010 to 2020 also includes protection funding identified through a keyword methodology. From 2021, in light of major improvement on the reporting of child protection funding on the platform and the breakdown of financial requirements by Protection Areas of Responsibilities on the FTS, this analysis looks solely at funding reported under the Child Protection Global Sector on the FTS.

Based on FTS data, **funding for child protection specific programming increases over time, inside and outside responses, reaching more than \$204m in 2022**—four times larger than the funding received and reported 10 years prior (almost \$52m in 2012). It should be noted, however, that up until 2017 child protection funding was reported under the protection sector. With the new FTS website published in 2017, child

protection became a category of its own and funding was more easily identifiable. But it's only in recent years, and in particular since 2021, that funding for child protection is more accurately tracked and reported on the FTS thanks to the breakdown of financial requirements by protection areas of responsibility (AoRs).

⁵ Crises with a Humanitarian Response Plan where conflict is a driver of the humanitarian crisis.
⁶ Data was extracted from the FTS on 29/03/2023 with an update from 18/04/2023 on 2023 data.

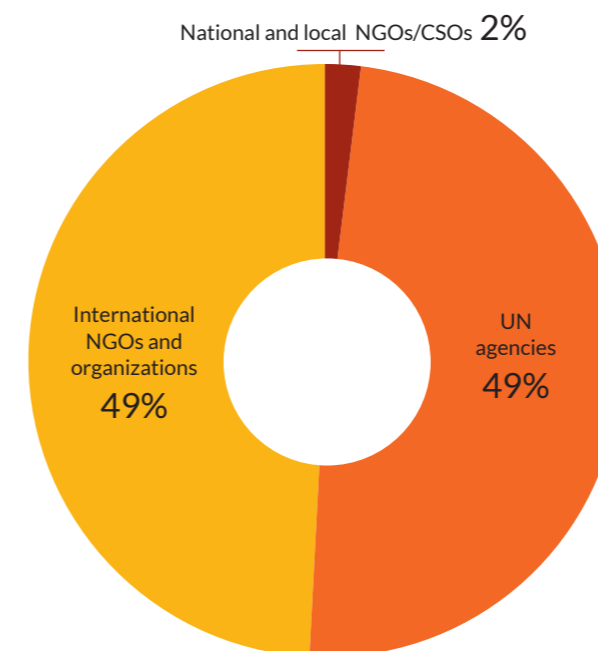
FIGURE 2. TOP 10 DONORS FUNDING CHILD PROTECTION (2022, inside and outside UN-coordinated appeals)



The main source of funding for child protection in humanitarian settings is bilateral government donors (75% of all child protection funding). The USA government was the largest donor in 2022 (42% of funding reported to the FTS), followed by the government of Germany (13%). Multilateral organisations are the second largest source of funding, with the European Commission's

Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department the third largest donor overall of child protection funding (10%). Another critical funding source for flexible financing is pooled funds including CERF and CBPFs: around 4% of child protection funding came from the Central Emergency Response Fund in 2022 and 3% as a sum of all eight country-based pooled funds.

FIGURE 3. FUNDING FOR CHILD PROTECTION BY DESTINATION ORGANISATION TYPE
(2022, inside and outside UN-coordinated appeals)



Funding for child protection is mostly received by:

- UN agencies: received 49% of child protection funding reported to the FTS but with an unknown proportion of this being channelled to implementing partners, including INGOs. Among UN agencies, UNICEF was the largest recipient (78% of this sum); and
- International NGOs: received 49% of child protection funding, with Save the Children being the largest recipient organisation (30% of this sum).

While some of these totals will indirectly fund local and national actors, that data is difficult to track. FTS data shows that only 2% of funding is directly received by national and local actors. 1.36% of this is to national NGOs/CSOs and 0.27% to local NGOs/CSOs. Based on data available, the majority of this funding was received in just three countries—Afghanistan, Mali and Somalia. Meanwhile, the Global Protection Cluster estimated from data collected via direct outreach to protection coordinators that at mid-year of 2022, 19% of child protection funding for HRPs went indirectly to local and national actors.⁷

⁷ Global Protection Cluster, Where Do We Stand Mid-Year 2022? A spotlight on operational access for protection; June 2022.



Children participating in craft based activities for Ramadan in a Child-Friendly Space in Al Hol camp. Around 57 000 people live in Al Hol camp, and about half of them are children.

In addition to child protection specific programming or stand-alone interventions (see Figure 1), **child protection is increasingly integrated and mainstreamed in humanitarian action**,⁸ in line with the **Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action for working across sectors**. The FTS reporting system allows to report funds with multiple values of destination sectors, recorded as “multiple sectors (shared)”.

In 2021, there was \$1bn *multiple sectors (shared)* funding where child protection was found to be one component among others. This funding was primarily for the Syria, Nigeria, Yemen, and South Sudan HRPs. In 2022, this funding grew to \$1.87bn, with Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan, and Iraq responses receiving the highest share of this funding. This is a major increase from the \$230m identified in 2020, suggesting that child protection is increasingly integrated across sectors. However, there is no breakdown of funding per individual sector, and it is not possible to know accurately what proportion of this multiple sectors bucket funds child protection, nor to what extent child protection is integrated or mainstreamed.

In Save the Children’s *The Unprotected report* (2022), by using the methodology of *Hidden Money: Growth of multiple sector*⁹ we were able to estimate that in 2021 up to \$206.3m from the multiple sectors bucket may have gone to child protection, and in 2022, this estimate was \$410.6m. However, it is reasonable to say these are gross overestimates as these calculations are based on the assumption that funding was equitably shared among all sectors involved in the project, which is highly unlikely; in the case of child protection more than other sectors, implementation costs predominantly involve staff and human resources costs.¹⁰

Although multiple sectors funding is a critical part of delivering for children and their protection, **the growing trend of multiple-sector funds is problematic to track the funding amounts to specific sectors as no breakdown is provided and funds are not attributed to any sector**. Currently, this funding is not tracked against UN-coordinated appeals’ sectoral requirements, leading to underestimates of the funding coverage for all individual sectors.

8) Child protection mainstreaming is the process of incorporating child protection principles, considerations, and interventions into the work of other sectors. While child protection integration or multi-sector responses consists of two or more sectors working together to achieve a shared programme outcome, this approach involves deliberately designing and implementing child protection programming.
 9) Mike Pearson, *Hidden Money: Growth of Multiple Sector Funding*, Humanitarian Funding Forecast, July 2021.
 10) The share of child protection would typically be very limited in high-cost or infrastructure intensive sectors such as health, food security, WASH, or shelter.

SECTION 2: CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANS IN CONFLICT-DRIVEN CRISES

This section focuses on HRPs for conflict-driven crises¹¹—which represent around 80% of all HRPs¹²—and the Bangladesh JRP. For these response plans, the quality of disaggregated data by sector, and for child protection in particular, is higher.¹³ HRPs for conflict-driven crises are defined in this analysis as countries with a coordinated response

(in this case an HRP) and where conflict is a driver of the humanitarian crisis. This categorisation builds on markers for types of crisis used by Development Initiatives in its *Global Humanitarian Assistance report* for 2022,¹⁴ as well as the *ACAPS Crisis Overview*.¹⁵

TABLE 1. CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING AND REQUIREMENTS IN HRPS IN CONFLICT-DRIVEN CRISES AND THE BANGLADESH JRP 2020–22 AGAINST THE OVERALL REQUIREMENTS AND FUNDING RECEIVED

HRPs and JRP	2022	2021	2020
Overall requirements	US\$ 37.29 billion	US\$ 25.32 billion	US\$ 24.02 billion
Overall funding received	US\$ 23.29 billion	US\$ 15.02 billion	US\$ 13.81 billion
Coverage	62% funded	59% funded	57% funded
CHILD PROTECTION	US\$ 794 M required represents 2.1% of the overall appeal	US\$ 556 M required represents 2.2% of the overall appeal	US\$ 433 M required represents 1.8% of the overall appeal
	US\$ 148 M required represents 0.6% of the overall appeal	US\$ 122 M required represents 0.8% of the overall appeal	US\$ 108 M required represents 0.8% of the overall appeal
Coverage	19% funded	22% funded*	25% funded**

*Note: 25% funded with additional data from Save the Children research
 **Note: Based on FTS data (incl. Keyword Search from Save the Children) - Data for Colombia CP requirements are not available

- ❑ In recent years, requirements for child protection represent on average 2% of the overall appeal requirements, whereas funding for child protection has averaged 0.7% of all funding received for the appeal.
- ❑ Child protection is consistently and proportionally less funded (with a lower percentage coverage) than other sectors. In recent years the overall appeal has been funded at almost 60%, whereas child protection was only 22% funded in 2021 and 19% funded in 2022.

11) Data for the Ukraine Flash Appeal 2022 has been included as this updated Flash Appeal 2022 supersedes the 2022 HRP and covers the period from 1 March to 31 December 2022.
 12) HRPs for conflict-driven crises represented 81% of all HRP requirements in 2021, 83% in 2022, 81% in 2023.
 13) Regional refugee response plans, flash appeals and other types of appeals included in the Global Humanitarian Overview are therefore excluded from this analysis.
 14) See Fig 1.1 - People in need, type and severity of crisis, and funding requirements, 2021, and the methodology on coding crisis types described under Methodology and definitions, Chapter 5. <https://devinit.org/resources/global-humanitarian-assistance-report-2022/>
 15) The following HRPs are not included in the analysis: Burundi, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Zimbabwe 2021.

TABLE 2. CHILD PROTECTION IN HRPS FOR CONFLICT-DRIVEN CRISES AND THE BANGLADESH JRP: ESTIMATED NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN NEED OF CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

YEAR	People in Need	People Targeted	Requirements (US\$)	Funding Coverage
2021	59.57 M	18.25 M	556.49M	22%
2022	66.04 M	22.37 M	794.17 M	19%
2023	66.11 M	27.69 M	930 M	

Note: Data for the Cameroon HRP is missing. Children in need and target are based on HRP and Humanitarian Needs Overview documents.

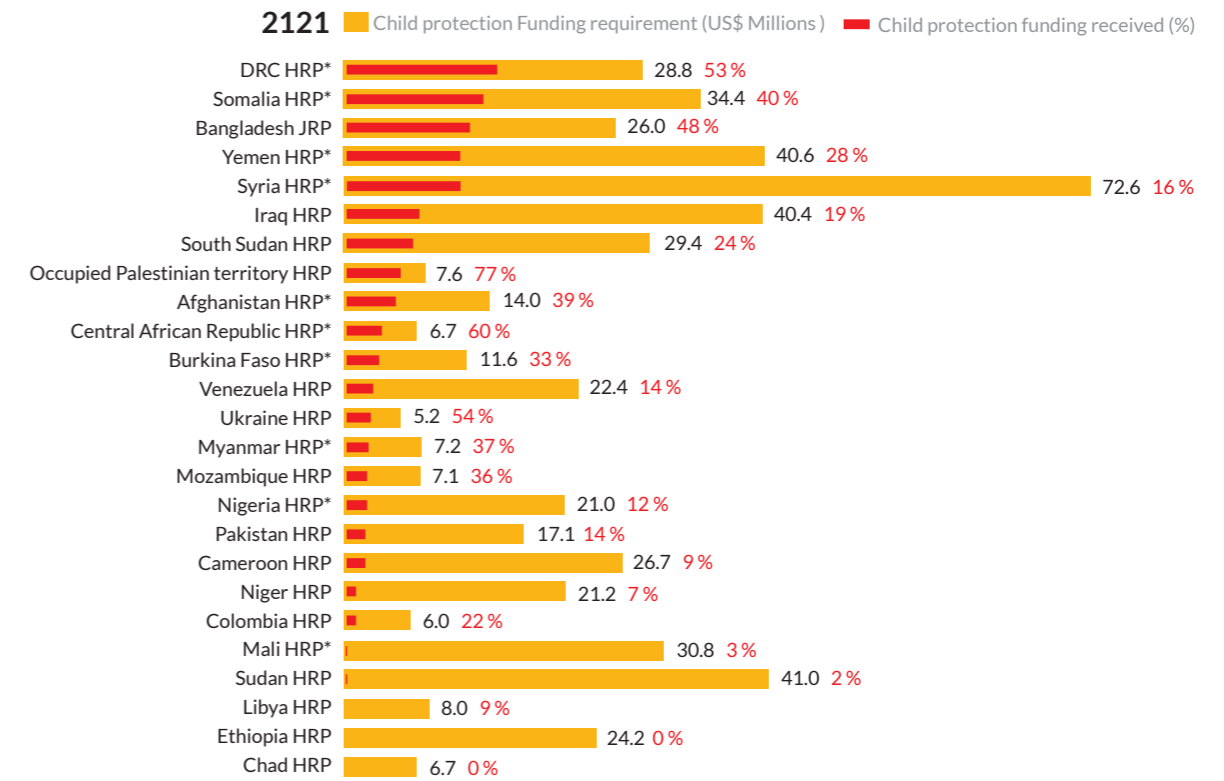
- In 2021 and 2022, the people targeted for child protection services represented around 30% of all those in need of these services. Data suggest that in 2023, people targeted are 42% of those in need of child protection services and the amount requested per person targeted has increased from \$31 in 2021 per person to \$34 in 2023.
- In the 2022 report of the Stop the War on Children series, Save the Children identified the 10 worst conflict-affected countries for children: Yemen, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, Syria, Mali, Central African Republic, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and Myanmar.¹⁶ Children in need of child protection services in these 10 countries make up 60% of the children in need of child protection services in all HRPs for conflict-driven crises.



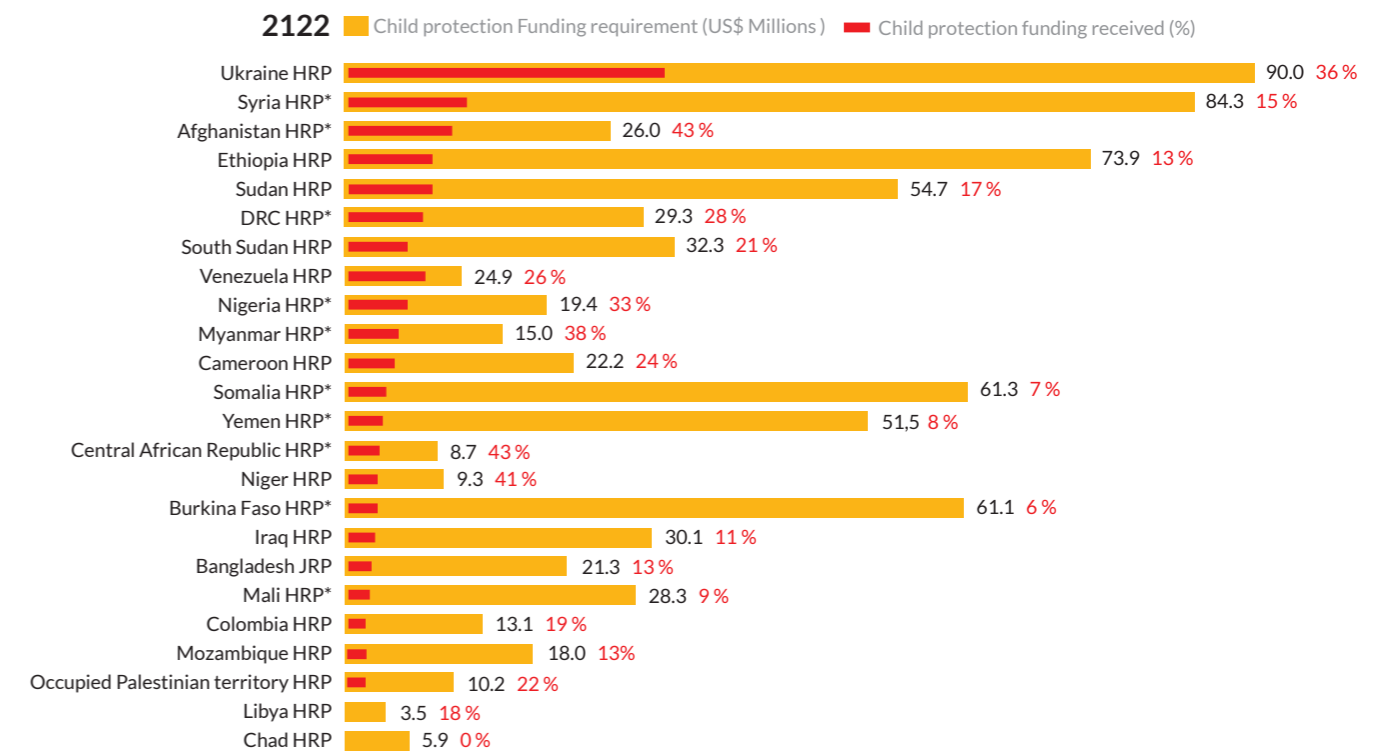
Mariam Traore, a member of the Local Child Protection Committee in Mopti region, Mali.

¹⁶ Save the Children's analysis and determination is based on nine indicators. Six indicators show in turn the prevalence of verified cases or incidents of each of the six grave violations and three further indicators draw on PRIOs research to show conflict intensity measured in turn by battle deaths, total child population living in conflict affected areas, and the share of children living in conflict zones relative to the child population of the country. For full methodology see Save the Children, The Forgotten Ones (2022) <https://www.savethechildren.org/content/dam/usa/reports/swoc-report-the-forgotton-ones-2022.pdf>

FIGURE 4. FUNDING PROGRESS FOR CHILD PROTECTION (2021 AND 2022; HRPS FOR CONFLICT-DRIVEN CRISES AND THE BANGLADESH JRP)



Source: 2021 "Conflict HRPs" and the Bangladesh JRP - FTS data accessed on 29/03/2023

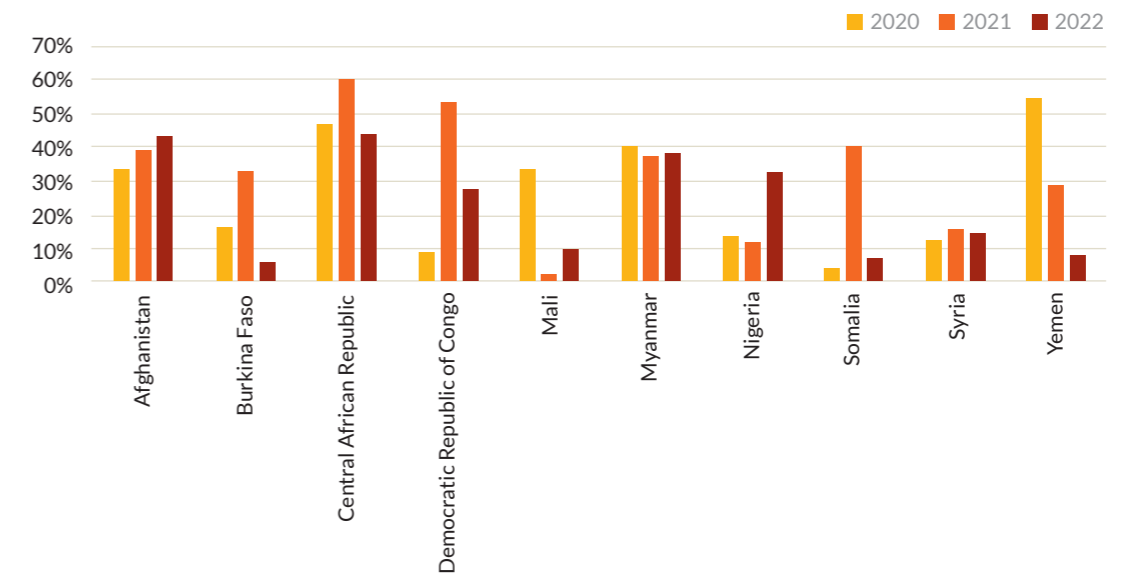


Source: 2022 "Conflict HRPs" and the Bangladesh JRP - FTS data accessed on 29/03/2023

Note: The 10 worst conflict-affected countries for children, as identified by Save the Children in The Forgotten Ones report (2022), are marked *.

- ❑ In dollar terms, the most funded responses in 2021 were Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and Bangladesh and in 2022, Ukraine, Syria, and Afghanistan. Relative to their requirements, these responses remain poorly funded (between 15% and 53% of their child protection requirements).
- ❑ Based on data available—with the caveat of reporting issues—the less funded responses were Chad, Libya, and Ethiopia in 2021 and Chad, Libya and the occupied Palestinian territory in 2022.
- ❑ Funding shortfalls remain across the board—while part of a broader trend of underfunding, child protection is disproportionately affected by funding gaps.
- ❑ HRP for conflict-driven crises and the Bangladesh JRP were funded at 22% on average in 2021, and in 2022 at only 19%. By contrast, funding to overall appeals was 59% in 2021 and 62% in 2022.
- ❑ In 2021, 16% of HRPs for conflict-driven crises were funded at more than 50% of their child protection requirements, in 2022 none were funded at more than 50%.
- ❑ The trend of underfunding is getting worse. The number of responses where child protection was less than 25% funded increased over the two last years. In 2021, it was 56% (14 out of 25 responses), then rose sharply in 2022 to 67% of responses. In other words, 16 out of over 24 responses in 2022 had less than a quarter of their required funding.

FIGURE 5. CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING IN THE 10 WORST CONFLICT-AFFECTED COUNTRIES



- ❑ Funding fluctuates year to year with significant variations in funding coverage. Not only do these variations prevent equitable child protection responses, unpredictability makes it difficult to implement good-quality multi-year child protection programmes that genuinely strengthen national child protection systems.
- ❑ It is not easy to determine what affects or attracts funding. However, in some circumstances, funding seems to be driven by political priorities and visibility in the media.
- ❑ Two contrasting examples of child protection funding—as shown on Figure 5—are Burkina Faso and Yemen:

1) Child protection funding requirements for Burkina Faso increased dramatically between 2020 and 2023, from \$9m in 2020 to \$12m in 2021, to \$61m in 2022, and \$72m in 2023. However, the necessary funding didn't follow. Only \$3.8m funding was received in 2021 and \$3.5m in 2022.

2) Percentage wise, Yemen had the best funded child protection response in 2020. However, there is a significant caveat: as a result of the COVID pandemic, Yemen did a prioritisation exercise, with all clusters reducing their funding requirements and child protection requirements were reduced significantly from \$38m to \$20m meaning that the percentage of funding to requirements increased while the actual amount did not. Although Yemen's child protection requirements rose back up the following year and have been relatively stable since then (\$41m in 2021, \$52m in 2022, and \$50m in 2023), received funding for child protection fell dramatically, from \$12m in 2021 to \$4m in 2022.

- ❑ In 2021 and 2022 the child protection response with the highest funding coverage is Central African Republic (60% in 2021, 43% funded in 2022). Afghanistan and Myanmar also had two of the better funded responses, at around 40%, even though their requirements increased between 2021 and 2022 from \$14m to \$26m for Afghanistan, and from \$7m to \$15m for Myanmar.
- ❑ The response that received the highest amount of funding in dollar terms was in Yemen in 2020, in Democratic Republic of Congo in 2021, and in Syria in 2022.



Arwa* lives with her mother, father and 3 sisters in a rural area of Hajjah, Yemen.

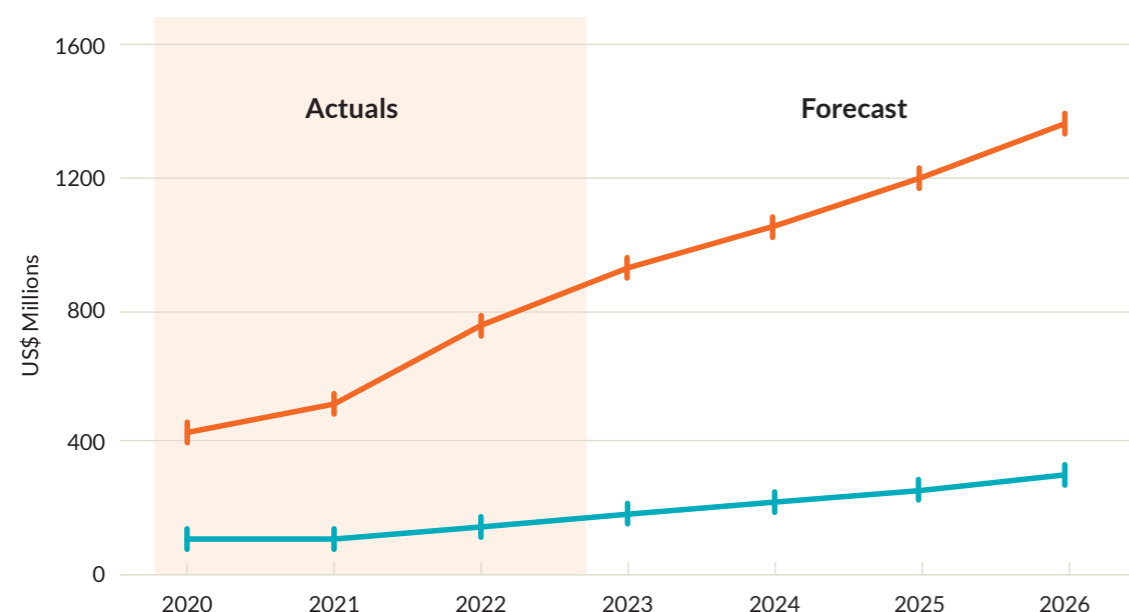
17) Challenges in reporting child protection funding on the FTS are observed for the Somalia HRP. Less than \$1m was reported in 2020 in the FTS, where 2021 data shows a funding coverage of 40% (\$14m received over the \$34m required). In 2022, while the FTS shows \$4m received over \$61m required (7% funded), the [online child protection dashboard](#) shows \$18m received.

SECTION 3: CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING IN CONFLICT-DRIVEN HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLANS: HOW WIDE WILL THE FUNDING GAP GO?

By 2026, forecasts suggest there will be a \$1bn funding gap for child protection funding in conflict settings. With the funding requirement forecast to climb to \$1.37bn by 2026, it equates to a 78% funding gap.

This is a drastic rise from 2020, when the funding gap was \$325m. In just six years, the funding gap is set to triple.

FIGURE 6: TRENDS IN CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING IN CONFLICT SETTINGS (2020–26)



Note: As with any forecast, there is a degree of uncertainty around these central estimates. The shaded area around these central estimates are the 80% prediction intervals; values in this shaded area are observed four out of five times that this scenario was simulated.

From 2023 to 2026, funding to humanitarian responses is forecast to grow by 21% year on year, climbing to around \$300m by 2026.¹⁸ This is a huge rise in funding in a short time period.

However, based on current trends and past data, the pace of funding increases will not be able to match the acceleration in child protection needs. The funding requirement by 2026 will likely climb to above \$1bn, with our central estimate being \$1.37bn (see Figure 6).

This is an alarming trend, with yearly funding gaps that appear insurmountable. However, this needs to be put in the context of broader humanitarian funding. The funding required in 2023 to all response plans is over \$54bn and therefore, if child protection were to need around \$1.4bn by 2026, as our central estimate suggests, this would be only 2.5% of the amount required for all humanitarian activity in 2023.

¹⁸ See the Annex for detail on the methodology and data for this analysis.

CALL TO ACTION: A TIME TO ACT

It's clear what needs to happen. As an international community, we need to turn the forecast of an ever-growing funding gap in child protection on its head.

Now is the moment to act. We must seize the opportunity of the Oslo Conference to highlight, elevate, and prioritise essential and life-saving child protection programming in armed conflict contexts.

Together we can ensure that children growing up in the most dangerous places on earth can have the care, support, and protection that every child needs.

END NOTES

Annex: Methodology for funding forecasting

The model used to forecast the funding requirement and funding received for 2023 to 2026 is based on an existing model used on [Humanitarian Funding Forecast](#).

For the latter part, funding received, the latest iteration of Humanitarian Funding Forecast's funding received forecast model was used. This incorporates numerous variables that are relevant to forecast funding received, including funding received in the last year, and the funding requirement, amongst other variables.

For the former part, the funding requirement, a new model was produced for the purpose of this analysis. The model takes the overall funding requirement (all plans, not just conflict), and applies an estimate of what percentage of the overall funding

requirement will be conflict-related (a distribution of values applies here based on previous years).

Based on the conflict-related funding requirement, a percentage is then applied, which equates to the estimated percentage that is Child Protection related. This is also a distribution of values based on previous years. However, the most recent percentage in 2022 was 2.4%, which is the highest value so far. The 'high' value in the distribution function is 3.0%, based on an assumption that 2.4% is the modal value, and the 'low' value is 1.8% in 2019. This assumption was made as there is a clear yearly upward trend, from 1.8% in 2019, to 2.4% in 2022.

For each year, a new funding requirement is produced based on the funding requirement last year, as well as a growth rate in the overall funding requirement (a distribution of values applies here based on previous years).

TABLE 3: ACTUALS AND FORECASTS OF CHILD PROTECTION FUNDING IN CONFLICT DRIVEN SETTINGS

(Actuals: 2020–22; Forecasts: 2023–26)

	Year	Actuals and Forecast: Central Estimate			Forecast: Lower and Upper Estimates			
		Received	Required	Funding Gap	Funding Lower estimate	Funding Upper estimate	Required: Lower estimate	Required: Upper estimate
ACTUALS	2020	\$108m	\$433m	\$325m				
	2021	\$107m	\$516m	\$409m				
	2022	\$143m	\$756m	\$614m				
FORECAST	2023	\$183m	\$930m	\$747m	\$135m	\$230m		
	2024	\$217m	\$1052m	\$834m	\$155m	\$279m	\$912m	\$1191m
	2025	\$256m	\$1197m	\$940m	\$179m	\$335m	\$1032m	\$1361m
	2026	\$302m	\$1366m	\$1064m	\$206m	\$398m	\$1177m	\$1551m

