



CHILDREN and ARMED CONFLICT REPORT of the SECRETARY-GENERAL

ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY · 2016

THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

Trends and developments: 2016

Despite some progress in certain country situations, increasingly complex conflicts have resulted in widespread violations against children with occurrences of 6 grave violations documented.¹

In 2016, there were at least **4,000** verified grave violations by **Government forces** and **over 11,500** by **non-State armed groups**. Many more violations remain unattributed.

Progress:

- In the **Philippines**, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) finalized its **Action Plan** for the recruitment and use of children was **delisted**;
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the national army finalized the recruitment and use of children aspects of its Action Plan and was **delisted for this violation. It remains listed for sexual violence against children**;
- In **Colombia**, the signing of the peace agreement, including a **special agreement on the release and reintegration of children** formerly recruited and used by the FARC-EP, resulted in a decrease in documented cases of recruitment and use of children;
- UN engagement with non-State armed groups resulted in the signing of **two new Action Plans** in **Sudan** (November 2016) and in **Mali** (March 2017); at the time of publication, a new Action Plan had been signed with the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) in **Nigeria** (September 2017);
- Enhanced UN engagement with Government authorities led to the signature of a **new Action Plan in Sudan** (March 2016);
- In the **Central African Republic**, **3,897 children**, including over one thousand girls, were separated from armed groups.

¹ Denial of humanitarian access is the sixth violation, in addition to the five triggers for listing parties to conflict.



Challenges:

- Over 8,000 children were killed or maimed in 2016;
- Afghanistan** recorded the highest number of **child casualties** since the UN started documenting civilian casualties in 2009, with **3,512 children killed or maimed**;
- In **Somalia**, the number of **children recruited** and used **doubled to 1,915** compared to 2015; in **South Sudan**, **1,022 children** were recruited and used;
- In **Yemen**, where the situation was particularly worrisome for the reporting period, in addition to

a dire humanitarian situation putting children at risk, the United Nations verified 1,340 child casualties; over half were caused by **air attacks**;

- In **Nigeria**, **suicide attacks** and the use of children as **human bombs** accounted for the majority of child casualties;
- Over **2,000 children were killed or maimed** in **Iraq** and **Syria**;
- 90 instances of denial of humanitarian access** were documented in Syria with an estimated 292,000 children trapped in besieged areas.

Action Plans under implementation



AFGHANISTAN

Afghan National Police, including the Afghan Local Police
(Recruitment and use)



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo
(Rape and other forms of sexual violence)



MALI

Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, including the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad
(Recruitment and use, Rape and other forms of sexual violence)



MYANMAR

Tatmadaw Army, including integrated border guard forces
(Recruitment and use)



NIGERIA

Civilian Joint Task Force
(Recruitment and use)



SOMALIA

Somali National Army
(Recruitment and use, Killing and maiming)



SOUTH SUDAN

Sudan People's Liberation Army
(Recruitment and use, Killing and maiming, Rape and other forms of sexual violence, Abductions)

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition
(Recruitment and use, Killing and maiming)



SUDAN

Government security forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, popular defense forces and national police forces
(Recruitment and use)

Sudan Liberation Army/ Minni Minnawi
(Recruitment and use)

Justice and Equality Movement
(Recruitment and use)

Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N)
(Recruitment and use)



YEMEN

Government forces, including the Yemeni Armed Forces
(Recruitment and use)

20 Situations of Conflict with Parties Listed in 14 Countries

63 PARTIES TO CONFLICT LISTED FOR GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN

9 GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES **54** ARMED GROUPS

OVER 9,500 NUMBER OF CHILD SOLDIERS RELEASED IN 2016



The UN Security Council has Identified 5 Triggers for Listing Parties to Conflict:

RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 1379 (2001)

61 Parties to Conflict **7** Government Security Forces **54** Armed Groups

KILLING AND MAIMING CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 1882 (2009)

21 Parties to Conflict **4** Government Security Forces **17** Armed Groups

RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

UN Security Council Resolution 1882 (2009)

15 Parties to Conflict **3** Government Security Forces **12** Armed Groups

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

UN Security Council Resolution 1998 (2011)

10 Parties to Conflict **2** Government Security Forces **8** Armed Groups

ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 2225 (2015)

9 Parties to Conflict **1** Government Security Forces **8** Armed Groups

Emerging Concerns and Prevention through Enhanced Engagement with Parties to Conflict

The United Nations is adopting a more proactive approach to generate additional engagement with parties to conflict, leading to more **protection** for children, **accountability** for perpetrators and to allow for greater focus on the **prevention of grave violations**.

This proactive approach should lead to the signing of additional Action Plans and speed up their implementation.

Prevention of Grave Violations Against Children

HIGHLIGHTING CONCERNS & PROGRESS



ENHANCING ENGAGEMENT WITH PARTIES TO CONFLICT



GAINING GREATER COMMITMENT FROM PARTIES TO CONFLICT



BEHAVIOR CHANGE BY PARTIES TO CONFLICT



BETTER PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

Disrespect for International Law and Its Impact on Children

Attacks on schools and hospitals stand as one of the most disturbing trends documented in 2016, occurring in **almost all countries** on the children and armed conflict agenda.

The **denial of humanitarian access** by armed groups and Government forces was another troubling trend, with devastating consequences for children.

The **detention** of children for their alleged association with armed groups remains a concern. Children should

be treated primarily as victims of recruitment and use with the best interest of the child and international protection standards as guiding principles. They should be immediately handed over to appropriate civilian child protection actors.

Asymmetrical attacks by non-State armed groups had a severe impact on children especially in **Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia** and **Syria**. The increased use of **children as human bombs** has been a particularly abhorrent tactic.

“Children, Not Soldiers”: Campaign ends, engagement continues

Launched in 2014 with UNICEF, the campaign “Children, Not Soldiers” formally ended in December 2016. Designed to generate political will, local ownership and international support **to end and prevent the recruitment of children by Government security forces** in conflict situations, the campaign also helped generate new possibilities of engagement with **non-State armed groups**, as they systematically constitute the vast majority of parties listed for grave violations against children.

The campaign has opened new doors to advocate for ending all grave violations against children. A follow-on campaign to increase public awareness on the six grave violations is currently under development with increased mobilization of resources and enhanced engagement with partners.

Excerpts from the Secretary-General’s Recommendations

- I urge all Member States engaged in operations against violent extremist groups, acting alone or as members of coalitions, to put in place safeguards to protect children from violations, including increased focus on the international humanitarian law principles of distinction and proportionality.
- I urge Member States, including when countering violent extremism, to treat children allegedly associated with non-State armed groups primarily as victims and to swiftly adopt protocols for their handover to civilian child protection actors to prioritize their reintegration.
- I encourage Member States to put in place long-term multi-year mechanisms to reintegrate recruited and used children, including a specific focus on girls as well as on psychosocial and education programmes and vocational training.
- I welcome national and international efforts to hold perpetrators accountable for crimes against children in situations of armed conflict. Impunity must end in order to break the cycles of violence and aide prevention efforts.
- I welcome the leadership and contribution of regional and subregional organizations in the protection of children. I call upon these organizations to engage with my Special Representative to continue integrating child protection considerations in their policies, planning of peace support operations, training of personnel and conduct of operations.

READ THE REPORT FULL ANNUAL REPORT:

<http://www.undocs.org/S/2017/821>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>