

# CHILDREN and ARMED CONFLICT REPORT of the SECRETARY-GENERAL

## ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY • 2017

### THE IMPACT OF ARMED CONFLICT ON CHILDREN

#### Trends and developments 2017

At least **21,000 violations<sup>1</sup>** have been verified in **2017** (6,000 by government forces, 15,000 by non-state armed groups), a large increase since 2016 (15,500).




Preventing violations against children and providing reintegration support to those affected should be a priority for the international community, as children continue to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict in many countries.

#### Progress


- In **Sudan**, the Sudanese Armed Forces have finalized the **Action Plan with the United Nations and were delisted for the recruitment and use of children**; a national plan on prevention is currently being developed.
- In **Colombia**, the FARC-EP have been **delisted** for the recruitment and use of children following the release of children from their ranks, as part of the peace agreement.
- In **Nigeria**, the Civilian Joint Task Force signed an **Action Plan** with the UN on 15 September 2017.
- In **Iraq**, the United Nations is currently **developing an Action Plan** with the Iraqi Government on ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children by the Popular Mobilization Forces.
- **Child Protection Units in Afghan National Police Recruitment Centres** have been established in all but one provinces, **preventing the recruitment of at least 300 children in 2017**.
- The government of the **Central African Republic** **ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict** in September 2017.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, awareness raising by the United Nations and military pressure contributed to the **separation of 2,360 children from armed groups**.

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



-  **The Safe Schools Declaration** was endorsed by two countries on the Children and armed conflict agenda: **Mali** (February 2018) and **Yemen** (October 2017).
-  In **South Sudan**, **806 children** were released from armed groups since the beginning of 2018.
-  **82 of the Chibok schoolgirls** abducted by **Boko Haram** in Nigeria in April 2014 **were released**.
-  In **Yemen**, the Government is currently **updating its Action Plan** with the United Nations **to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children**

by the Yemeni Armed Forces. **Progress also resulted in a significant reduction of attacks on schools and hospitals** by the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen who was delisted for this violation.

-  In **Myanmar**, there is **progress in the implementation of the Joint Action Plan** signed between the armed forces (Tatmadaw) and the UN. **Four listed armed groups have also agreed to engage in dialogue with the United Nations** to develop Action Plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

## Action Plans under implementation



### AFGHANISTAN

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



### CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique  
(Recruitment and use, Killing and maiming, Rape and other forms of sexual violence, Attacks on schools and hospitals)



### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo  
(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

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)

## Challenges

Protracted crises have resulted in an increase of grave violations against children in several conflict situations.

- Over 10,000 children were killed or maimed in 2017, with numbers increasing substantially in Iraq (717) and Myanmar (296).
- In Afghanistan there was a decrease in the overall number of children killed and maimed (3,134); however, the country still had the highest number of child casualties of all situations on the children and armed conflict agenda.
- In the Democratic Republic of the Congo with the crisis in the Kasai region, the number of children recruited or used doubled to 1,049. The number of attacks on schools and hospitals increased eight times (515 cases).
- In Syria, protracted conflict led to the deterioration of living conditions of around 400,000 persons, including children, trapped in besieged areas in Ghouta and Rural Damascus. The number of children killed and maimed remained high (1,271).
- In Colombia, the UN continued to verify cases of child recruitment and use by the ELN, despite a ceasefire agreement in the last quarter of 2017 and the commitment to suspend the enrolment of minors under the age of 15 into their ranks as one of the humanitarian measures agreed to in parallel to the agreement.
- In Yemen, where the situation was particularly dire, the number of children killed or maimed remained high (1,316) and so did the recruitment and use (842).
- Recruitment and use quadrupled in the Central African Republic (299 verified cases) and the number of cases of sexual violence more than doubled (137 girls, one boy) compared to 2016.
- Over 900 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against boys and girls were verified in all 20 country situations, a high number considering that the violation remains underreported.
- In Myanmar, cases of sexual violence and killing and maiming of children were verified and the armed forces were listed for these violations.
- In Somalia, the number of abductions more than doubled with over 1,600 children abducted

by Al-Shabaab while the number of children recruited and used remained high (2,127).

- In South Sudan, 783 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were verified, a significant increase. The recruitment and use of boys and girls remained high (1,221).
- In Mali, 657 schools were closed as of December 2017.
- A total of 1,456 children were verified as having been abducted by Boko Haram in northeast Nigeria in recent years.

## Emerging Concerns and Prevention through Enhanced Engagement with Parties to Conflict

- The reintegration of children formerly associated with armed groups and armed forces with their families and communities is a crucial step for the wellbeing of former child soldiers, and also to help break cycles of violence.
- Due to lack of resources and expertise, not all children released from armed groups are able to receive reintegration support. Reintegration efforts should be supported by long-term, multi-year funding mechanisms.
- Large scale cross-border recruitment by ISIL and Boko Haram and a growing number of unaccompanied children or children on the move highlight the importance of a coordinated international response, including with regional and sub-regional actors, to multiply child-protection efforts, in line with international law.
- In many country situations, the number of children detained for their alleged association with armed groups remains worrisome. In Iraq, at least 1,036 children were held in juvenile detention facilities on national security related charges, mostly for their alleged association with ISIL. In Nigeria, 1,903 children were deprived of liberty for their or their parents' alleged association with Boko Haram.
- Children formerly associated with armed groups should be treated primarily as victims and detention only used as a last resort, for the shortest period of time and alternative to detention should be prioritized whenever possible.



## 20 Situations of Conflict with Parties Listed in 14 Countries

**66** PARTIES TO CONFLICT LISTED FOR GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN

**9** GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES **57** ARMED GROUPS

**OVER 10,000** NUMBER OF CHILD SOLDIERS RELEASED IN 2017

**OVER 12,000** NUMBER OF CHILDREN BENEFITING FROM REINTEGRATION SUPPORT



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

### RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 1379 (2001)

**63** Parties to Conflict ..... **7** Government Security Forces  
..... **56** Armed Groups

### KILLING AND MAIMING CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 1882 (2009)

**24** Parties to Conflict ..... **5** Government Security Forces  
..... **19** Armed Groups

### RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

UN Security Council Resolution 1882 (2009)

**18** Parties to Conflict ..... **4** Government Security Forces  
..... **14** Armed Groups

### ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

UN Security Council Resolution 1998 (2011)

**12** Parties to Conflict ..... **2** Government Security Forces  
..... **10** Armed Groups

### ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN

UN Security Council Resolution 2225 (2015)

**14** Parties to Conflict ..... **1** Government Security Forces  
..... **13** Armed Groups

## Excerpts from the Secretary-General's Recommendations

- I urge Member States, whether acting alone or as part of coalitions or international forces, to ensure that their responses to all threats to peace and security are conducted in full compliance with international law.
- I call upon Member States to continue supporting the implementation of action plans and other commitments aimed at strengthening the protection of children in armed conflict, including by facilitating the engagement of the United Nations with armed groups.
- I encourage Member States, as well as regional and subregional organizations, to further strengthen dedicated child protection capacities and to engage with the United Nations to prioritize the development of tools to forestall grave violations, including through the adoption of prevention plans aimed at systematizing preventive measures.
- I encourage the donor community to enjoin a discussion to address the funding gaps for the reintegration of children recruited and used and to support the establishment of a multi-year funding mechanism allowing child protection actors to react swiftly to the release of children and set in place long-term viable alternatives to military life, notably by placing a specific focus on girls, on psychosocial and on education programmes and vocational training.
- I welcome all steps taken to ensure full compliance with international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law, and call on Member States to further strengthen the protection of children in armed conflict.

### READ THE ANNUAL REPORT:

<http://undocs.org/s/2018/465>

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org>

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