“A Credible List”:

Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2023 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict

Introduction

Since its inception over 25 years ago, the United Nations’ Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda has grown to become one of the most significant, dynamic, and broadly supported multilateral initiatives within the UN system. It provides international policymakers a unique set of tools for promoting the protection of children in armed conflict and addressing grave violations of their rights.

Among these tools is the Secretary-General’s annual report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict (‘annual report’), which has been presented to the Security Council each year since 2000. The main purpose of this report is to draw the attention of UN Member States to grave violations against children and the perpetrators of these violations. With its Resolution 1379 (2001), and subsequent resolutions on children and armed conflict, the Security Council mandated the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports a list of parties to armed conflict that commit the following grave violations against children: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions. The Council further strengthened this system in 2005, when it established a unique global Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to collect and rigorously verify information on the grave violations against children in armed conflict.

The listing mechanism, which draws its evidence base from the MRM, has served as another important tool to ensure the protection of children in armed conflict. It provides a key first step towards accountability by clearly identifying warring parties responsible for grave violations against children in armed conflict. The mechanism also serves as a foundation for the UN to dialogue with warring parties, secure concrete commitments to end and prevent violations through the adoption of UN action plans, and create tangible, positive changes for children affected by war.

Policy Note
April 2023

About Watchlist

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national, and international nongovernmental organizations, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a fiscally sponsored program of United Charitable, a not-for-profit organization.

watchlist@watchlist.org
www.watchlist.org
Despite the important progress made, children continue to face the devastating impacts of armed conflict, and grave violations continue to be committed against children with impunity. In 2021, the UN documented nearly 24,000 grave violations against children. More children are living in conflict zones than at any time in the previous two decades. The rapid expansion of the global counterterrorism agenda threatens to unravel established laws and norms for protecting children’s rights, and the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated children’s vulnerability to grave violations and other abuses.

In recent years, civil society organizations and UN Member States have raised concerns about the process for determining which perpetrators are included in the report’s annexes. They have noted that any politicization of the listing decisions threatens to undermine the report’s credibility and weaken its strength as a tool for promoting accountability and compliance with applicable international law and for preventing future violations. Of particular concern are those inconsistencies found between the data on violations that are included in the narrative section of the annual report and the parties listed in its annexes, notable non-listing of some parties, listing of parties for only some described violations, and de-listing of parties who have not yet fully met the criteria as specified by the Secretary-General in 2010. In March 2021, a group of internationally respected child rights experts echoed these concerns after undertaking an independent review of the Secretary-General’s listing and de-listing decisions between 2010 and 2020. Furthermore, gathering and verifying evidence on grave violations frequently involves considerable security risks for those participating in the MRM. When listing and de-listing decisions do not consistently reflect this data, they can undermine these efforts and it can appear as if these risks were taken in vain.

Since 2017, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (‘Watchlist’) has published an annual policy note with recommendations for the Secretary-General on parties to armed conflict that have committed grave violations against children and should be listed in the annexes of the forthcoming annual report. Watchlist’s annual policy note also makes recommendations on parties that should be further investigated and country situations that should be included as “other situations of concern” in the Secretary-General’s annual report.

With this seventh edition of its annual policy note, Watchlist reiterates its call to Secretary-General António Guterres to publish a complete list of perpetrators that is evidence-based and accurately reflects data collected and verified by the MRM, applying the 2010 criteria for listing and de-listing equally and consistently across country situations. Watchlist further calls on the UN, its Member States, and civil society to build on the progress made to protect children in armed conflict by defending and upholding existing protection frameworks, strengthening efforts to prevent conflict, and promoting accountability for and to children.

---

Methodology

Watchlist conducted a desk review of various publicly available reports for 16 relevant country situations, plus the Lake Chad Basin region, for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2022, to inform the recommendations included in this policy note. These particular country situations were chosen based on the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, focusing on those situations where parties were cited as having committed a considerable number of grave violations against children but were not listed in the report’s annexes.

Sources include the Secretary-General’s previous annual reports on children and armed conflict; reports from UN agencies, peacekeeping and special political missions, treaty bodies, and commissions of inquiry; and documentation by Watchlist’s members and other reputable international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with relevant expertise. In some cases, Watchlist also analyzed credible news media sources. Its review focused on the five grave violations that “trigger” listing: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions.

Watchlist’s method to arrive at a recommendation for listing is derived from the Security Council’s relevant resolutions on children and armed conflict and the Secretary-General’s previous annual reports.6 While not setting a standard numerical threshold that should necessarily trigger listing, particular attention was paid to parties responsible for 10 or more verified cases of recruitment and use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, or attacks on schools and hospitals during a single reporting period, and 20 or more cases of killing and maiming or abductions.7 In addition to reviewing information on violations committed during the 2022 reporting period, Watchlist considered the number of UN-verified violations committed in 2021 to assess the establishment of patterns or trends. In some cases, Watchlist found that parties were responsible for committing a high number of violations across two consecutive years (2021 and 2022) and recommended listing. In other cases, there was enough information to suggest that parties had committed a high number of violations in 2022 alone to recommend listing.

For some parties mentioned in the body of the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report that were not listed, Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate to determine whether they should be listed in the 2023 annexes. For these parties, existing evidence of verified violations was concerning but not sufficient to justify recommending listing. If investigation by the UN Country Team is not possible, the UN could send a delegation to the country to independently verify allegations, as per the MRM guidelines.8

It should be noted that the information contained in this policy note is not intended to encompass all incidents perpetrated against children in all relevant situations during the reporting period. Rather, it aims to highlight specific incidents to support Watchlist’s recommendations to list certain parties, add additional violations to parties already listed, or to further investigate certain situations.

7 Watchlist paid particular attention to reviewing cases where, in the past two years, a party to conflict had committed 10 or more cases of recruitment and use, sexual violence, or attacks on schools and hospitals in a single year, but was not listed in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annexes. The number for recruitment and use was chosen in accordance with Security Council Resolution 1379, which requests the Secretary-General to list parties that recruit or use children (i.e., not specifying a pattern). For sexual violence, which is notoriously difficult to document, 10 or more violations were considered cause for particular concern and a likely indication of a pattern. Similarly, regarding attacks on schools and hospitals, where each attack often affects dozens or more children, 10 or more incidents were deemed likely to indicate a pattern. For killing and maiming and abductions, the number of violations indicating a likely pattern was set at 20 or more. However, as indicated in the text above, these figures do not represent a standard numerical threshold; instead, they were analyzed in connection with other contextual information, including the number of violations documented in previous years.
Recommendations

On the basis of its review and bearing in mind the limitations described above, Watchlist recommends that the UN Secretary-General:

1. List the following parties that have committed grave violations against children in 2022 in the annexes of his upcoming annual report:
   a. Central African Republic: Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R), as part of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) for rape and other forms of sexual violence
   b. Central African Republic: Government and pro-government forces, including the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, internal security forces, special mixed security units, other security personnel for rape and other forms of sexual violence
   c. Democratic Republic of the Congo: Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke for recruitment and use
   d. Democratic Republic of the Congo: Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) for killing and maiming
   e. Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory: Palestinian armed groups for killing and maiming
   f. Myanmar: Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guards, for attacks on schools and hospitals
   g. Myanmar: Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guards, for attacks on schools and hospitals (the SSPDF was de-listed for this violation in 2022)
   h. South Sudan: The South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF) for attacks on schools and hospitals (the SSPDF was de-listed for this violation in 2022)
   i. Syria: Russian Government Forces, including the Aerospace Defence Forces of the Russian Federation, and Russian-Supported Syrian Air Forces for killing and maiming
   j. Ukraine: Russian Government Forces and pro-government forces for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals

2. Further investigate to determine whether parties should be listed in the annexes:
   a. Cameroon: Armed separatist groups for attacks on schools and hospitals
   b. Colombia: Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) / Clan del Golfo for recruitment and use
   c. Ethiopia: Tigray People’s Liberation Front (TPLF) for attacks on schools and hospitals and for rape and other forms of sexual violence
   d. Ethiopia: Government Forces, for killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals and for rape and other forms of sexual violence
   e. Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory: Palestinian armed groups for killing and maiming
   f. Myanmar: People’s Defence Forces (PDF) for attacks on schools and hospitals
   g. Syria: Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) for killing and maiming
   h. Syria: Turkish Government Forces for killing and maiming
   i. Ukraine: Russian Government Forces and pro-government forces for rape and other forms of sexual violence and abductions
   j. Yemen: Saudi- and Emirati-led Coalition for killing and maiming

Previous policy notes have recommended the addition of countries with emerging conflicts as “other situations of concern” in the narrative of the report and recommended further investigation regarding parties responsible for committing grave violations to determine whether they should be listed in the annexes. In 2022, the Secretary-General announced that Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Ukraine would be included as situations of concern in his 2023 report. Watchlist has no recommendations for additional situations of concern for the 2023 report.
Annex I Countries

Afghanistan

Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP), and the Taliban and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani Network, are listed for recruitment and use of children and for killing and maiming children in the Secretary-General’s 2022 report on children and armed conflict. In addition, ISIL-KP and the Taliban are listed for attacks on schools and hospitals, and the Taliban is listed for abductions.

Central African Republic (CAR)

Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC), Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC), and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) as part of the former Séléka coalition; local defense militias known as the anti-balaka; and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) are listed in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. The LRA is also listed for abductions, and the FPRC, MPC, and UPC as part of the former Séléka coalition are also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R), as part of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC)

Recommendation to List – Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, the UN found 3R responsible for 28 verified cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence in 2021, as well as four additional cases jointly attributed to 3R and anti-balaka. Furthermore, 3R was the main perpetrator of conflict-related sexual violence in CAR in 2021, according to the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on conflict-related sexual violence, having been found responsible for 138 cases, including an unspecified number of cases against girls.

According to the Secretary-General’s October report on CAR, the 3R were found responsible for seven cases of rape and sexual violence against children between June 2 and October 1, 2022. Between October 2, 2022, and February 1, 2023, the 3R were responsible for four additional cases of rape and sexual violence against children. During the same reporting period, 13 girls were subjected to sexual slavery by the 3R and Lord’s Resistance Army armed groups, and 3R reportedly committed multiple gang rapes, often against vulnerable girls. It is not clear how many of these cases fall within the 2022 reporting period of the upcoming annual report on children and armed conflict.

13 Ibid., para. 59.
Government and pro-government forces, including the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, internal security forces, special mixed security units, other security personnel

Recommendation to List – Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

In 2021, the UN found Government and pro-government forces of the Central African Republic responsible for 20 verified cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.\(^{14}\) This included 13 cases by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, six cases by other security personnel, and one case by special mixed security units.

Between October 2, 2021, and October 1, 2022, the UN attributed 25 incidents of conflict-related sexual violence to the national defense and internal security forces and seven to other security personnel.\(^{15}\) While the ages of the survivors involved were not specified in all cases, at least 11 cases reportedly involved children.\(^{16}\) In an incident reported by the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in CAR, a young girl was reportedly raped in the context of an anti-rebel offensive launched by “members of the armed forces and Russian allies” in the village of Aigbando in January 2022.\(^{17}\)

Between October 2, 2022, and February 1, 2023, national defense and security forces were reportedly responsible for 15 cases of conflict-related sexual violence, including cases involving seven girls.\(^{18}\) It is not clear how many of these cases fall within the 2022 reporting period of the upcoming annual report on children and armed conflict.

Colombia

The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) and the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups are listed for recruitment and use in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) / Clan del Golfo

Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Recruitment and Use

The Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict attributed the recruitment and use of 17 children to AGC in 2021, along with the killing of six children and one case of using a school for military purposes.\(^{19}\) Similar practices had been documented in previous years, for which Watchlist recommended in its 2022 “Credible List” report to further investigate the AGC to determine if listing was warranted for recruitment and use. The Secretary-General’s most recent report

---


\(^{16}\) Report of the Secretary-General on CAR (S/2022/762), October 13, 2022, para. 69.


\(^{18}\) Report of the Secretary-General on CAR (S/2023/108), February 16, 2023, para. 59.

\(^{19}\) UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/76/871–S/2022/493), June 23, 2022, paras. 40–41, 44.
on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia attributed 18 cases of recruitment and use of children to AGC between July 1, 2019, and June 30, 2021. Allegations against the AGC for this grave violation also took place in 2022. Research by International Crisis Group (ICG) published in February 2023 cites AGC (referred to as Gulf Clan [Clan del Golfo] in the text) as among armed groups still actively recruiting children and young people, including reportedly recruiting girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation. ICG’s research describes increasing recruitment trends particularly during the pandemic when young people were unable to attend school or find employment, many of whom are below 25 years old and “a significant number are minors,” as well as recruitment of girls “as young as eight or nine” into prostitution networks managed by and serving the armed groups.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, 12 non-state armed groups (NSAGs) are listed for various grave violations, and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) are listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

Mai Mai Biloze Bishambuke

Recommendation to List – Recruitment and Use

In the 2022 annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, the Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke were reportedly responsible for recruiting 57 children in a previous year who were used by the armed group until their separation in 2021. In the Secretary-General’s eighth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in DRC, Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke were found responsible for 44 cases of new recruitment and use between April 1, 2020, and March 31, 2022, though the breakdown by year was not reported. Between September 17 and October 31, 2022, the UN successfully advocated for the release of 47 children from the Mai-Mai groups Biloze Bishambuke and Machine, according to the Secretary-General’s November 2022 report on MONUSCO.

Mouvement du 23 mars (M23)

Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

The resurgence of the armed group Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) in late 2021 and an escalation in clashes with Government Forces in 2022 has reportedly led to violations against civilians, including the killing or injuring children. According to the Secretary-General’s October 2022 report on implementation of the peace, security, and cooperation framework for the DRC and the region, between March 16 and September 15, 2022, M23 were
reportedly responsible for the deaths of 12 children.27 Throughout 2022, the Secretary-General’s periodic reports on MONUSCO documented child casualties attributed to M23. For example, on March 28, one child was wounded by M23 combatants during an attack in Rutshuru territory.28 Between June 17 and September 16, 2022, 12 children were reportedly killed in incidents involving M23 in North Kivu.29 From October 20 to November 18, clashes between M23 and the FARDC resulted in the deaths of 13 children.30 Furthermore, both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch documented attacks carried out by M23 between November 28 and December 1, 2022, which resulted in child casualties.31 According to a statement by the spokesperson for the Secretary-General, preliminary investigations by MONUSCO into the attacks on November 29 and 30 found that at least 12 children were among the 131 civilians killed.32 In a January 2023 statement, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict expressed shock at the intensification of violence against children in Eastern DRC, noting that the number of grave violations attributed to M23 “has increased more than twentyfold over the last year.”33 Allegations have also been raised against M23 for recruiting and using children, as well as for attacking schools and hospitals.34

**Iraq**

*Da’esh (formerly listed as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant)* is listed for all five “trigger” violations in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. The *Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF)* are listed for recruitment and use.

**Mali**

The NSAGs *Ansar Eddine* as part of *Jama’a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin; Platform,* including affiliated groups; and *Mouvement national de libération de l’Azawad (MNLA)* are listed for recruitment and use in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. *Ansar Eddine and the MNLA are also listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence.* Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

---

30 Report of the Secretary-General on MONUSCO (S/2022/892), November 30, 2022, para. 28.
Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS)

Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

According to the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, ISGS killed and maimed 40 children in Mali in 2021.35 The Secretary-General’s fourth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Mali cites ISGS as responsible for 53 verified incidents of killing and maiming of children between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2022.36 It is unclear how many of these violations fall within the 2022 reporting period of the upcoming annual report. The Secretary-General’s periodic reports on MINUSMA attribute 69 grave violations against children to ISGS between January 4, 2022, and January 3, 2023, however, a breakdown by violation was not reported.37 Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International have further documented six separate attacks perpetrated by groups affiliated with ISGS in March 2022, with witnesses reporting over 50 child casualties.38 For example, Human Rights Watch documented accounts of two separate attacks carried out on March 28, in which witnesses claim fighters associated with the Islamic State killed 37 boys and three girls.39

In a June 2022 conference room paper, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported that the UN had documented 260 attacks on schools and school personnel between February 2021 and March 2022 by the Myanmar military and armed groups. Though not specifying how many of these 260 attacks are attributable to the Myanmar military, the Special Rapporteur further states that the “Myanmar military has attacked schools using helicopters, fighter jets, and heavy artillery...the military has also reportedly captured teachers and forced them to serve as guides.”

In addition, the Tatmadaw has occupied schools, including when children were present, and used them as bases for military operations. In one such incident in February 2022, the Tatmadaw reportedly detained more than 100 children, most aged three to six, at a monastery school in Yinmabin Township, Sagaing Region and held the students for approximately 36 hours. In a widely publicized incident on September 16, 2022, the Tatmadaw attacked a school in Let Yet Kone, Sagaing Region, killing at least 13 people, including at least six children, and injuring nine other children. The Secretary-General has strongly condemned the attack. In another example, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has documented an incident in October 2022 where the military beheaded a schoolteacher in Pauk Township, Magway Region, and hung his head on the gate of the school. The teacher was reportedly accused of affiliation with the National Unity Government.

In total, according to OHCHR, by November 2022 the UN figures indicated that attacks on schools and school staff across Myanmar had doubled in 2022 as compared with the previous year. This included 175 incidents, including the beheading and September attack described above, and the UN has deemed the military and affiliated militias as responsible for at least half of these incidents. Furthermore, the use of schools by the Tatmadaw for military purposes has likely increased the vulnerability of schools to attack by anti-military armed groups.

In addition, OHCHR reported that attacks on health care and health care workers continued into 2022, in conjunction with military operations. On October 20, for example, the military conducted an airstrike against a newly opened hospital in Man Yu Gyi village, Sagaing Region, killing one woman and injuring five others. The report further describes “arbitrary arrests of health care workers and people transporting medical supplies, the obstruction of access to health care through the..."

44 Ibid., para. 100.
46 Ibid., para. 102.
48 “Strongly Condemning Deadly Attack on School in Myanmar, Secretary-General Stresses Children Must Have Safe Place to Learn,” press release, September 20, 2022.
50 Ibid., para. 63.
51 Ibid., para. 63.
52 Ibid., para. 16.
imposition of physical roadblocks, a bureaucratic and discriminatory authorization regime and the confiscation and destruction of medical supplies.”

**People’s Defence Forces (PDF)**

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals**

In a June 2022 conference room paper, the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar reported that the UN had documented 260 attacks on schools and school personnel between February 2021 and March 2022 by the Myanmar military and armed groups. Though not specifying how many of these 260 attacks are attributable to each party, the Special Rapporteur explicitly states that “both the military and other armed groups are responsible for attacks on educational facilities, and both have occupied schools, ensuring the politicization and militarization of educational infrastructure.” The same report notes a spike in attacks carried out on government schools at the start of the 2021-2022 school year, “presumably carried out by anti-junta groups and subsided after the [National Unity Government] called for PDFs to avoid attacking educational facilities.” Ethnic armed groups, militias, and PDFs have reportedly also been responsible for attacks on teachers, including for supposed collaboration with the junta, as well as for the military use of schools.

**Somalia**

In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, Al-Shabaab is listed for all five “trigger” violations. The Somali Federal Defense and Somali Police Force are each listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence, while the NSAG Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama’a is listed for recruitment and use.

**South Sudan**

The South Sudan People’s Defense Forces, including Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People’s Defense Forces, are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abductions in the Secretary-General’s 2022 report on children and armed conflict. The Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition - pro-Machar is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abductions. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

**The South Sudan People’s Defense Forces (SSPDF)**

**Recommendation to Re-List – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals**

In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, the SSPDF were removed from the annexes for the grave violation of attacks on schools and hospitals. According to the data presented in the same report, zero cases of verified attacks on schools and hospitals were attributed to SSPDF in 2021, however, 10 cases of the military use of schools and hospitals

---

53 Ibid., para. 61.
55 Ibid., para. 8.
56 Ibid., para. 99.
57 Ibid., para. 100-101, 103.
were attributed to them. In 2022, the Secretary-General’s periodic reports on the situation in South Sudan document 28 attacks on schools and hospitals perpetrated by Government Forces, including the SSPDF between December 7, 2021, and November 30, 2022, the vast majority of which occurred between September 1 and November 30. Additionally, the Secretary-General’s fourth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in South Sudan attributes three out of the 11 total verified incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals to the SSPDF between July 1, 2020, and June 30, 2022. At least one of these incidents occurred in 2022, when SSPDF soldiers looted a primary school in Central Equatoria, destroying the school’s fence, removing its roofing sheets, stealing a power generator, and disrupting children’s access to education. In addition, the UN verified 20 incidents of the military use of schools or hospitals during the same reporting period.

**Sudan**


**Syrian Arab Republic**

Da’esh (formerly listed as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) is listed for all five “trigger” violations in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. In addition, the NSAGs Hay’at Tahrir al Sham and the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam are listed for recruitment and use of children and killing and maiming, while the Kurdish People’s Protection Units and Women’s Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) are listed for recruitment and use. Government Forces, including National Defense Forces and pro-government militias, are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict.

**Russian Government Forces, including Aerospace Defence Forces of the Russian Federation, and Russian-Backed Syrian Air Forces**

**Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming**

While the Secretary-General’s annual reports on children and armed conflict and reports on the situation of children in armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic do not explicitly cite the involvement of Russian Forces in Syria, credible sources over multiple years, including the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic, continue to document evidence of Russian Forces operating in support of Syrian Government Forces.

In 2022, these sources documented the killing and maiming of at least 36 children in connection to the presence of Russian security personnel or Russian aircraft. For example, the UN Commission of Inquiry on the

---

59 Ibid., para. 166.
62 Ibid., para. 63.
63 Ibid., para. 64.
The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented nine children killed by Russian airstrikes in 2022, as well as one child seriously injured on February 22 after having been run over by a Russian armored vehicle near Deir Ezzor city in Al-Salhiyah area. An additional attack on November 6 reportedly resulted in 8 child casualties with sources implicating the involvement of Russian Forces.

**Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF)**

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Killing and Maiming**

Syrian Democratic Forces were found responsible for killing and maiming 55 children in 2021, according to the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. In ten separate incidents, the Syrian Network for Human Rights and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights recorded the killing and maiming of 21 children by the SDF in 2022. For example, on February 7, SDF opened fire inside Al Hol camp following an...
allegation, killing one child, and injuring two others. On August 3, the Syrian Network for Human Rights documented the SDF firing several missiles on Izaz city in Aleppo, hitting the perimeter of an elementary school and wounding five civilians, including three children. The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights documented the killing of a total of 13 children by the SDF in 2022.

**Turkish Government Forces**

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Killing and Maiming**

The UN attributed two incidents of killing and maiming of children to Turkish Armed Forces operations and an additional four incidents to “border area fire from Türkiye” in the 2022 annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and NGOs, in particular, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, documented multiple incidents involving Turkish Forces in 2022, reportedly resulting in at least 38 child casualties. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic noted higher levels of civilian casualties particularly in July, August, and November, “coinciding with the beginning of the Turkish Operation Claw-Sword.”

For example, on February 8, 2022, multiple locations were shelled in Ayn al-Arab in Aleppo governorate, resulting in three child casualties. Commission of Inquiry analysis of the incident indicated that 120 mm unguided mortar ammunition was used and that the shelling may have been fired from Türkiye, and the Ministry of Defense of Türkiye announced that it had launched an attack that same day. On August 6, 2022, a Turkish-manufactured missile launched from a drone killed two boys aged 15 and 17, as well as one other civilian man. On August 16, Turkish shelling impacted multiple locations in Ayn al-Arab and surrounding villages, including in the courtyard of a hospital, resulting in the death of a teenage boy and injury of a two-year-old boy. On August 18, a drone reportedly caused damage at an education center near Al-Hasakah, killing five girls and injuring another 10 girls.

---


79 Ibid., para. 111.


82 Ibid., para. 111.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported 10 further incidents involving Turkish forces that led to child casualties in 2022, and a total of 13 children killed in attacks by Turkish forces in 2022.

**Yemen**

_Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah), pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees, and Security Belt Forces are listed for recruitment and use in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict. In addition, the Houthis are listed for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General’s 2023 annual report on children and armed conflict._

**Saudi- and Emirati-led Coalition**

_**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Re-Listing Is Warranted – Killing and Maiming**_

In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, the Saudi- and Emirati-led Coalition (referred to as the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen), were found responsible for the killing and maiming of 100 children in 2021. By mid-January 2022, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights had recorded 839 airstrikes by the Coalition, including one strike on Sanaa in which one child was killed and another child injured. Additional Coalition airstrikes in late January 2022, reportedly resulted in at least five additional child casualties. The NGO Mwatana for Human Rights documented a total of 28 airstrikes by the Coalition in 2022, which reportedly resulted in 14 children killed and another 19 children injured.

---


Annex II Countries

**Burkina Faso**

Jama’a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abductions in the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict.

**The Lake Chad Basin**

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province, are currently listed for abductions.

**Nigeria**

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama’atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda’awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province, are currently listed for all five “trigger” violations.

**The Philippines**

The Abu Sayyaf Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and New People’s Army are currently listed for recruitment and use.
Countries in the Report/Parties Not Yet Listed

The Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict further includes information on the situation of children in Cameroon, India, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanon, Libya, and Pakistan. However, no parties to these conflicts were listed in the annexes to the report. In the same report, the Secretary-General stated that three situations of concern (Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Ukraine) would be added with immediate effect, citing the gravity and number of violations of international law against civilians, including children. This follows Watchlist’s 2022 recommendations that the Secretary-General bring these situations to the attention of the Security Council by designating them as “other situations of concern.” The Secretary-General additionally called for enhanced monitoring capacity in the Central Sahel region. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to these other situations of concern.

Cameroon

Armed Separatist Groups

Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

In 2022, the conflict between armed separatist groups and the Government of Cameroon continued, with reports claiming that the separatists attacked students, teachers, and schools. In the Secretary-General’s 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, the UN verified 22 attacks on schools and hospitals in 2021, of which 16 were attributed to “unidentified armed groups.” Watchlist recommended in its 2022 “Credible List” report to investigate to determine if listing was warranted for attacks on schools and hospitals.

Evidence suggests that similar patterns continued in 2022. Human Rights Watch documented various incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals by armed separatist groups in North-West and South-West Cameroon in 2022. For example, on June 12, 2022, separatist fighters reportedly physically assaulted, threatened, and humiliated 11 students who were walking to a high school in Buea, South-West region. On that occasion, fighters also allegedly shot one of the students and seized or destroyed their school materials. On January 19, 2022, separatist fighters also reportedly attacked the government high school in Weh and abducted five teachers. According to the same source, they also injured two students “for not complying with a school boycott and for not contributing financially to their struggle for independence.” The teachers would be later released following a ransom payment. On February 11, Human Rights Watch reported that separatist fighters set fire to three dormitories of a boarding secondary school in Okoyong, South-West Region, and on April 5, separatists also stormed the campus of a university located in the North-West region, shooting in the air. On April 7, armed separatists reportedly kidnapped...

---

93 Ibid.
94 Ibid.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid.
33 seminary students in Bachuo-Ntai, South-West region.97 Human Rights Watch also reported that, on June 10, suspected separatist fighters burned down a hospital in Mamfe, South-West region.98 In a situation report published in May 2022, OCHA noted that “different attacks against educational facilities, personnel, and school children” had taken place, resulting in one teacher being killed, one school principal abducted, and one school facility set on fire by unidentified men.99 The International Crisis Group also reported that “anglophone separatists” imposed a lockdown in North-West and South-West Cameroon in September 2022 to “delay start of school year until at least” October 1, which is the anniversary of the self-proclaimed Ambazonia Republic.100

Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate and verify these incidents, including by identifying which armed separatist groups were responsible, and determine if such groups should be listed in the annexes.

Ethiopia

In 2022, the Secretary-General added Ethiopia as a situation of concern with immediate effect, highlighting the gravity of clashes that took place in 2021 between the Ethiopian National Defence and Federal Police Forces, the Tigray People’s Liberation Front, and other parties, as well as “the killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access.”101

98 Ibid.
103 Ibid., para. 65.
allegedly behind looting and destroying an unspecified number of health facilities in North Gondar during that same month. The same source has reported that in October 2022, a Red Cross ambulance driver and the Ethiopian National Defense Force (ENDF) soldiers being transported were stopped and killed by the TPLF.

**Ethiopian Government Forces**

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Killing and Maiming**

Credible sources have reported that children have been killed and maimed in 2022 as a result of air strikes by the Ethiopian Government Forces, in particular the ENDF. On January 5, UNHCR confirmed that three refugees, including two children, were killed and four were injured in an air strike on the Mai Aini refugee camp in northern Tigray. A few days later, on January 7, an air strike on an IDP camp in Dedebit resulted in the killing of children, which the UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia deemed to be a violation of international law.

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing is Warranted – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals**

There have been allegations of attacks on schools and hospitals by the Ethiopian Government Forces in 2022, in particular as a result of airstrikes. The UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia reported that on January 7, 2022, the ENDF conducted drone strikes against an IDP camp, first against the main school building in the compound, which was full of displaced people, killing most of its inhabitants. The Commission found “reasonable grounds to believe that there were no soldiers or military equipment in or near the camp on the day of the attack.”

September 2022 that more than 1,000 Tigrayan women and girls have been subjected to rape and sexual violence while the ENDF was in control of the region. According to the Commission, survivors implicated the ENDF and other Government Forces. Furthermore, it noted that it has received “credible information indicating that rape and sexual violence continue, including in Western Tigray,” and that rapes of Tigrayan women and girls were “often accompanied by other forms of violence designed to humiliate them.”

**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing is Warranted – Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence**

The UN International Commission of Human Rights Experts on Ethiopia, which examined cases since November 2020, noted in its report published in

---


107 Ibid.


110 Ibid., para. 94.


112 Ibid., para. 57.

113 Ibid., para. 59.

114 Ibid., para. 48.

115 Ibid., para. 54.
Israel / Occupied Palestinian Territory

Israeli Government Forces

Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

In the latest annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, the UN found Israeli Forces responsible for killing 78 children and maiming 982 children in 2021. In the same report, the Secretary-General noted “substantial air strikes by the Israeli armed forces, resulting in a significant increase in the number of cases of violence against children,” due to the May 2021 escalation of violence. He further stated that “should the situation repeat itself in 2022, without meaningful improvement, Israel should be listed.” Between 2015 and 2020, the UN attributed over 6,700 child casualties to Israeli Forces, yet they have never been listed.

In 2022, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recorded 43 Palestinian children killed and 1,051 children injured by Israeli Forces. Many of these child casualties occurred in the context of demonstrations, clashes, security operations, attacks, alleged attacks against Israelis, and other incidents. For example, on April 15, Israeli Security Forces injured around 180 Palestinians, including at least 27 children during tensions at Al Aqsa Mosque compound. In relation to this incident, a spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights called the Israeli Security Forces’ use of force “widespread, unnecessary, and indiscriminate,” and noted that a number of Palestinians, including children, “who did not appear to pose any threat to Israeli Security Forces in any manner, were beaten with batons or shot with sponge-tipped bullets from close range.” According to OCHA, as of December 19, Israeli Forces had killed a total of 16 children in search-and-arrest operations in 2022.

Children were also among those killed and injured during the three-day escalation of violence in Gaza in August, including 17 Palestinian children killed and 151 injured.

Briefing the UN Security Council on behalf of the Secretary-General in December 2022, the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process expressed deep concern over the high level of violence witnessed in the months prior, including the “highest numbers of fatalities in years,” including 44 Palestinian children and one Israeli child. In fact, 2022 was the deadliest year

---

117 Ibid., para. 303.
118 Annual reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, 2016-2021, available at: https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/
122 Ibid.
124 UN Security Council, UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, Reporting on UNSCR 2334 (as Delivered by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Mr. Tor Wennesland), September 28, 2022.
125 UN Security Council, UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, Reporting on UNSCR 2334 (as Delivered by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Mr. Tor Wennesland), December 19, 2022.
for Palestinians in the West Bank since the UN began systematically monitoring fatalities in 2005, and the deadliest year for children in more than 15 years.

Watchlist has recommended that the Secretary-General list Israeli Government Forces for killing and maiming children each year since 2017.

Recommendation to List – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

In the latest annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, the UN found Israeli forces responsible for 128 attacks on schools and hospitals in 2021, continuing a pattern of such attacks documented in previous years (26 in 2020, 201 in 2019). Evidence suggests that this pattern of attacking schools and hospitals continued in 2022, with at least 11 individual incidents documented by OCHA in which schools, hospitals, or related personnel were impacted due to actions taken by Israeli Forces. For example, on January 18, 2022, Israeli Forces raided a school in Deir Nidham village, physically assaulted and arrested two 17-year-old students, and reportedly damaged school windows, chairs, and tables during physical confrontations between school staff, students, and Israeli Forces. Classes were then suspended for the remainder of the day, affecting over 210 students. In another incident on October 13, Israeli Forces fired tear gas cannisters near a school, resulting in the hospitalization of three children and the cancellation of classes for the rest of the day, impacting over 270 students.

Palestinian Armed Groups

Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Killing and Maiming

In his 2022 annual report on children and armed conflict, the Secretary-General found Palestinian armed groups responsible for killing eight children and maiming 46 children. In the same report, the Secretary-General noted “substantial rocket strikes by the Palestinian armed groups, especially in May 2021, resulting in a significant increase in the number of cases of violence against children,” and stated that “[i]f the high number of violations against children were to be repeated in 2022, without meaningful improvement, Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas’ al-Qassam Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s al-Quds Brigades, should be listed.”

According to data collected by OCHA, one Israeli boy was killed and eight Israeli children were injured by Palestinians in 2022 (the perpetrators were not specified as an armed group in the data). Between December 10, 2021, and March 18, 2022, the Secretary-General reported one Israeli child had been injured “by Palestinians

---


129 UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/76/871–S/2022/493), June 23, 2022, para. 78; See also: the Secretary-General’s annual reports on children and armed conflict from 2021 (S/2021/437) and 2020 (S/2020/525).


134 Ibid., para. 302.

clashes, the throwing of Molotov cocktails, attacks, and other incidents.” During the August escalation in Gaza, the Secretary-General reported nine Israeli children were “lightly injured.” In addition to these Israeli children, Defence for Children International Palestine documented the killing of five Palestinian children due to rockets misfired by a Palestinian armed group during the August violence.

Ukraine

In his 2022 report, the Secretary-General acknowledged cases of violations against civilians, including children, as a result of “the high intensity of this conflict.”

Russian Government Forces and pro-government forces

Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

From February 2022 to January 2023, OHCHR recorded the killing of a total of 429 children, and the injury of 808 children. Though a specific perpetrator for these casualties is not specified by OHCHR, several credible sources have attributed multiple cases of killing and maiming of children to Russian Government and pro-government forces since the Russian invasion in February 2022. Watchlist has identified reports of several incidents in which more than 100 children were killed or maimed, noting that the actual number is likely to be higher.

For example, Amnesty International reported that on February 25, 2022, a preschool in northeastern Ukraine was hit with cluster munitions while civilians were taking shelter inside, killing three of them, including a child and wounding another child. Amnesty also reported that a series of attacks launched by Russian or pro-Russian forces on March 1 and 2, 2022, resulted in the killing of two children, aged four and 12-years-old. On March 3, 2022, Russian aircraft reportedly dropped unguided bombs in the center of Chernihiv, killing at least 47 civilians and wounding another 32. Local sources reported that children were among those wounded. Attacks on Biloruskyi Lane, also on March 3, reportedly resulted in the killing of a 14-year-old child. Amnesty International also documented that Russian Forces shot and killed a 15-year-old boy on the evening of March 3. On March 4, Russian soldiers reportedly fired at a civilian car, wounding a nine-year-old child. Human Rights Watch also documented information of another nine-year-old girl who was reportedly shot in the shoulder while trying to run away from Russian Forces in Bucha in March 2022. Other reports from the same location also found that Russian Forces opened fire against a civilian car on March 5, killing all four passengers, which included

---

136 UN Security Council, UN Security Council Briefing on the Situation in the Middle East, Reporting on UNSCR 2334 (as Delivered by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process Mr. Tor Wennesland), September 28, 2022.
137 Ibid.
144 Ibid.
OHCHR has also documented three children killed by Russian Forces due to the use of cluster munitions in March 2022 and the death of an eighteen-year-old man and 17-year-old twin boys in Mokhnatyn village on March 22 after being shot by Russian Forces. The UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine also found in November 2022, that missile strikes from Russia killed at least eight civilians, including one girl, and injured seven children, in the city and region of Kyiv. Furthermore, it reported that a two-day-old baby boy was killed, and two doctors were injured by a rocket that hit a hospital in the region of Zaporizhzhia.

Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine documented cases of sexual and gender-based violence by Russian Forces against women, men, and girls, aged from four to 82 years old. According to the Commission, these forces committed sexual violence in two situations: during house searches and against victims they had confined. The Commission is also investigating two cases of repeated rape of an adolescent girl over a three-month period in Kharkiv Province, allegedly by a soldier of the Russian armed forces. Civil society and news sources collected by Insecurity Insight have also reported girls being raped in Kherson city and Vorzel town (Bucha) in March 2022, and in Irpin Town (Kyiv Oblast), in April 2022.

Recommendation to List – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

OHCHR has estimated that over 3,000 educational institutions and more than 600 medical facilities have been damaged or destroyed in the conflict in Ukraine, mostly as a result of the use of explosive weapons.
Several credible sources have attributed attacks against schools and hospitals to Russian Government Forces and pro-government forces. For example, in February 2022, Human Rights Watch reported that a Russian ballistic missile carrying a cluster munition struck outside a hospital in Vuhledar, killing civilians and injuring six healthcare workers, damaging the hospital, an ambulance, and civilian vehicles. Also in February, a Ukrainian oncology center was left in flames after Russian Forces opened fire on the building in Melitopol. Civil society and news sources collected by Insecurity Insight reported that in March 2022, hospitals in Lysychansk and Popasna were damaged as a result of Russian Forces’ shelling. Also in March, Russian Forces attacked a hospital complex in Mariupol, wounding civilians and medical staff and the Zhytomyr City Hospital, which was damaged in a Russian air strike. In April 2022, sources collected by Insecurity Insight allege that artillery fire by Russian Forces hit and damaged the Balakliia District Hospital, resulting in 70 patients and medical staff being evacuated from the facility. News reports have also alleged that in November 2022, Russian Forces attacked a hospital in Vilnianski in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, killing a newborn baby.

Russian Forces have also reportedly attacked schools and other educational facilities, according to the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA); this particularly took place in the context of Russian Forces shelling and firing missiles on Ukrainian cities. Amnesty International documented incidents in February 2022 in which a missile damaged a school in Mariupol, blowing in windows and pockmarking the walls with metal fragments and an explosive weapon hit a kindergarten in Chernihiv. Also in February 2022, a preschool in northeastern Ukraine was hit with a cluster munition while civilians took shelter inside, killing a child and wounding another child. Amnesty International claimed that the attack appears “to have been carried out by Russian Forces, which were operating nearby.” In March 2022, at least three schools in Kharkiv were also reportedly hit by Russian military strikes, and more than 60 people were feared dead after a Russian bomb reportedly flattened a school being used as a shelter. Educators have also allegedly been abducted or detained for resisting the adoption of Russian curriculum.

---

163 Insecurity Insight, “Violence Against or Obstruction of Health Care in Ukraine, 3-12 March,” March 2022.
164 Ibid.
168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
**Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abductions**

The MRM Field Manual defines the grave violation of abduction to include “the unlawful removal, seizure, capture, apprehension, taking or enforced disappearance of a child either temporarily or permanently for the purpose of any form of exploitation of the child. This includes, but is not limited to, recruitment in armed forces or groups, participation in hostilities, sexual exploitation or abuse, forced labor, hostage-taking and indoctrination.”

Cases of Russian Forces deporting children from Ukrainian occupied territories to the Russian Federation have been documented by the UN Commission of Inquiry, which has concluded that these “violate international humanitarian law, and amount to a war crime.” The Pre-Trial Chamber II of the International Criminal Court (ICC) also issued warrants of arrest for Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, and Ms. Maria Lvova-Belova, Commissioner for Children’s Rights in the Office of the President of the Russian Federation. The Pre-Trial Chamber II considered, based on information shared by the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC, that there are reasonable grounds to believe that each suspect “bears responsibility for the war crime of unlawful deportation and that of unlawful transfer of population from occupied areas of Ukraine to the Russian Federation, in prejudice of Ukrainian children.”

The Humanitarian Research Lab of the Yale School of Public Health published a report in February 2023, also sharing similar information, noting that Commissioner Lvova-Belova had claimed in the summer of 2022 that 350 “orphans” from Ukraine had been adopted from Russia occupied Donetsk and Luhansk, and “over a thousand” were awaiting adoption. Cases were also reported by Amnesty International in November 2022, and Human Rights Watch in March 2023.

Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate and verify these deportations to determine if these actions amount to the grave violation of abductions as defined by the MRM Field Manual and warrant listing of Russian Government Forces in the annexes.

---


