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UN: New Report Finally Holds the Israeli Forces and Palestinian Armed Groups Accountable for Violations Against Children

UN Secretary-General Added Israeli Government Forces and Palestinian Armed Groups to “List of Shame.” Also listed parties from: Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mali, and Sudan

NEW YORK – 13 June 2024 – In a [long overdue](#) and welcome move, the UN Secretary-General has included Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups in his “list of shame,” an [annual report](#) which confirms an unprecedented number of grave violations against children committed in 2023. Israeli forces are listed for killing and maiming children as well as attacks against schools and hospitals, while Hamas’ Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s Al-Quds Brigades are included for killing and maiming children and abduction.

The UN verified 8,009 grave violations by all parties in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory and an additional 23,000 are pending verification. Israeli forces were responsible for a total of 5,698 grave violations, including killing 206 children and maiming an additional 1,892 in 2023, as well as 340 attacks on schools and hospitals. The UN verified the killing of an additional 2,051 children in the Gaza Strip between October 7 and December 31, noting that attribution is ongoing, but most incidents were caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas by Israeli forces. The UN also found Hamas’ Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades responsible for 116 grave violations and the Palestinian Islamic Jihad’s Al-Quds Brigades responsible for 21 grave violations, including the killing, maiming, and abduction of children in the October 7 attacks. This is the first time Israeli government forces and Palestinian armed groups have ever been listed in the Secretary-General’s annual report, despite the UN finding them responsible for violations since 2005.

“The Secretary-General has finally acknowledged that there are consequences for grave violations against children in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” said **Ezequiel Heffes, Director of [Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#)**, a network of international human rights and humanitarian organizations working to increase the protection of children in armed conflict. “These parties must take concrete steps to address these violations, including holding the commanders to account and putting in place measures to prevent future child casualties. I cannot stress this enough: international law must be respected, and violations should not be tolerated. Compliance is not negotiable, not now, not ever.”

The Secretary-General’s annual report and its annexed list of perpetrators have served as a unique and largely effective tool for identifying perpetrators and pressuring them to end violations and protect children in times of war. The report’s impact and credibility rely largely on the application of the same standards to all parties across all armed conflicts.

In his 2024 annual report on children and armed conflict, the UN Secretary-General has detailed a staggering 32,990 violations committed around the world and included a list of States and non-State armed groups responsible for such violations. This year’s report included information on 26 conflict situations where children are facing serious harm in war. The Secretary-General raised concerns about armed parties increasingly launching attacks on schools and hospitals and blocking lifesaving humanitarian aid from reaching children in need, as well as the impact of the closing of UN missions on children. For the second year in a row, State armed forces were responsible for the highest numbers of child casualties, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access for children.

Other longstanding situations in the report also saw alarming increases in the levels of violence reported against children in the past year, particularly in the Lake Chad Basin, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Sudan. Grave violations against children in Sudan rose by 480 percent when compared to 2022, leading the Secretary-General to list the Sudanese Armed Forces for killing and maiming and attacks against schools and hospitals and the Rapid Support Forces for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence and attacks against schools and hospitals. The Secretary-General also maintained Russian armed forces on the list, given the gravity and number of violations and lack of commitments in 2023. Armed groups were also listed for additional violations in Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Mali.

The highest number of verified grave violations against children, apart from Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, took place in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Somalia, Nigeria, and Sudan. The Secretary-General's report also included information this year on violations committed against children in Haiti and Niger. In Haiti, the UN verified 383 grave violations against 307 children by different actors, including the recruitment and use of 23 children, the killing and maiming of 206 children, 41 cases of sexual violence against girls, 37 attacks on schools and hospitals, the abduction of 71 children, and 5 incidents of denial of humanitarian access.

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See also:

- [Open Letter from 23 Nongovernmental Organizations \(NGOs\) to the UN Secretary-General Calling for a Credible, Evidence-based List of Perpetrators, May 30, 2024](#)
- [“A Credible List”: Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2024 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, April 2024](#)

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a New York-based coalition of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) that seeks to end violations against children in armed conflict and guarantee their rights. For more information, please visit: <https://watchlist.org/>.