

## Policy Note

April 2024

# “A Credible List”:

## Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2024 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict

### Introduction

Since 2017, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (‘Watchlist’) has published an annual policy note with recommendations for the United Nations Secretary-General on parties to armed conflict that have committed grave violations against children and therefore should be listed (or further investigated for listing) in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s annual report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict (‘annual report’). The annual report—which has been presented to the Security Council each year since 2000—is a tool of the UN’s Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda created to address grave violations of children’s rights.

With this eighth 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 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (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.

### Background

Since its inception over 25 years ago, the 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, including through the Secretary-General’s annual report.



### 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.**

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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 MRM to collect and rigorously verify information on grave violations against children in armed conflict.

The listing mechanism, which draws its evidence base from the MRM, has served as an 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.

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 growing impunity. The UN verified over 24,000 grave violations against children that occurred in 2022.<sup>1</sup> However, not all parties responsible for grave violations against children have been named in the annexes of the Secretary-General's annual report. In some cases, governments have exerted pressure to avoid such listing for themselves or their allies.

As a result of these dynamics, civil society organizations and UN Member States have raised concerns about the process for determining which states and non-state armed groups 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 evidenced violations, and de-listing of parties who have not yet fully met the criteria as specified by the Secretary-General in 2010.<sup>2</sup> In March 2021, a group of internationally respected child rights experts echoed some of these concerns after undertaking an independent review of the Secretary-General's listing and de-listing decisions between 2010 and 2020.<sup>3</sup>

## Methodology

Watchlist conducted a desk review of publicly available reports for 22 relevant country situations, plus the Lake Chad Basin region, for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2023, to inform the recommendations included in this policy note. These country situations were chosen based on the Secretary-General's 2023 annual report on CAAC, 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. Watchlist's 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.

1 UN General Assembly (UNGA) and UN Security Council (UNSC), 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 4.

2 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (April 13, 2010) UN Doc A/64/742-S/2010/181, paras 176-180.

3 Eminent Persons Group, 'Keeping the Promise: An Independent Review of the UN's Annual List of Perpetrators of Grave Violations against Children, 2010 to 2020' (March 2021) <<https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/eminent-persons-group-report-final.pdf>> (accessed April 8, 2024).

Sources include the Secretary-General’s previous annual reports on CAAC; 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 as well as reputable databases that monitor grave violations through synthesizing local and international reporting. Watchlist acknowledges the inherent limitations of this desk review, given its reliance on English-language documents, and the predominant use of Western-authored sources. However, this report does not endeavor to exhaustively document the occurrence of grave violations against children, rather to serve as an indicator of patterns of grave violations by parties to conflict who may warrant listing in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s annual CAAC report.

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.<sup>4</sup> 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, sexual violence, or attacks on schools and hospitals during a single reporting period, and 20 or more cases of killing and maiming or abductions.<sup>5</sup> In addition to reviewing information on violations committed during the 2023 reporting period, Watchlist considered the number of UN-verified

violations committed in 2022 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 (2022 and 2023) and recommended listing. In other cases, there was enough information to suggest that parties had committed a high number of violations in 2023 alone to recommend listing.

For some parties mentioned in the body of the Secretary-General’s 2023 CAAC report that have not yet been listed, Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate to determine whether they should be listed in the 2024 annexes. For these parties, available evidence of verified violations was concerning but not sufficient to justify recommending listing, or while a pattern of violations was apparent, the sources lacked specific attribution to particular perpetrators. If investigation by the relevant country team is not possible, the UN could send a delegation to the country to independently verify allegations, as per the MRM guidelines.<sup>6</sup> Member States should encourage all parties to cooperate and facilitate the work of delegations in order to support this monitoring and reporting process.

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.

4 UNSC Resolutions 1379 (2001), para 16; 1882 (2009), para 3; 1998 (2011), para 3; and 2225 (2015), para 3.

5 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 2023 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.

6 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO), ‘Guidelines: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on Grave Violations against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict’ (June 2014) <[https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM\\_Guidelines\\_-\\_5\\_June\\_20141.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM_Guidelines_-_5_June_20141.pdf)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

## 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 2023 in the annexes of his upcoming annual report:
  - a. Democratic Republic of the Congo: Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) for killing and maiming
  - b. Mali: Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), including Ansar Eddine, for killing and maiming
  - c. South Sudan: Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Kit-Gwang (SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang) for recruitment and use
  - d. Sudan: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) for killing and maiming
  - e. Sudan: Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence
  - f. Burkina Faso: Defence and Security Forces for killing and maiming
  - g. Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Israeli Government Forces for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals
  - h. Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: The Qassam Brigades (the armed wing of Hamas) and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigade for killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abduction
2. Further investigate to determine whether parties should be listed in the annexes:
  - a. Central African Republic: Government and pro-government forces, including the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, the gendarmerie, the police, internal security forces, special mixed security units, and other security personnel for rape and other forms of sexual violence
  - b. Colombia: Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups for killing and maiming
  - c. Colombia: Clan del Golfo (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) (AGC) for attacks on schools and hospitals
  - d. Mali: Malian armed forces and affiliated forces for killing and maiming
  - e. Myanmar: People's Defense Forces (PDFs) for attacks on schools and hospitals
  - f. Somalia: Somaliland Forces for killing and maiming
  - g. South Sudan: Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Kit-Gwang (SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang) for abduction
  - h. South Sudan: National Salvation Front (NAS) for abduction
  - i. Sudan: Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) for attacks on schools and hospitals
  - j. Sudan: Rapid Support Forces (RSF) for attacks on schools and hospitals and abduction
  - k. Syria: Russian Government Forces for killing and maiming
  - l. Syria: Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) for killing and maiming
  - m. Syria: Turkish Government Forces for killing and maiming
  - n. Lake Chad Basin: Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) for killing and maiming
  - o. Ukraine: Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups for abduction
  - p. Cameroon: Armed Separatist Groups for attacks on schools and hospitals
  - q. Haiti: Various armed gangs including those aligned with the G9 Family and Allies led by Jimmy Chérizier ("G9 Alliance") and the opposing G-Pèp Alliance, the Gran Grif gang, as well as the vigilante movement known as Bwa Kalé for all "trigger" violations

# Annex I Countries

## Afghanistan

*Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (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 2023 report on CAAC. 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

*The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) as well as local militias known as the anti-balaka are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC for the grave violations of recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. In addition, LRA are listed for abductions. 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 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 2024 report on CAAC.*

## **Government and pro-government forces, including the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, the gendarmerie, the police, internal security forces, special mixed security units, and other security personnel**

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

The 2023 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC identified the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic as responsible for 16 cases of rape against girls. It also verified three cases by other security personnel, three by internal security forces and one by the special mixed security units.<sup>7</sup> The high number of cases of rape or sexual violence in 2022 in which Government Forces were implicated—the majority of which were committed against girls—led to their continued listing in the annex of the Secretary-General's 2023 report on conflict-related sexual violence, indicating that they are credibly suspected of committing or being responsible for patterns of rape or other forms of sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> Between July 2021 and June 2023, Government and pro-government forces were responsible for 29 percent (53 cases) of verified incidents of sexual violence committed against children in the Central African Republic.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 30.

<sup>8</sup> UNSC, 'Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 22, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/413, para 24 and Annex.

<sup>9</sup> UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic: Report of the Secretary-General' (January 24, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/93, para 67.

In 2023, Government Forces continued to be identified as perpetrators of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. In January and February, UN reporting identified seven incidents: four girls raped by members of Government Forces,<sup>10</sup> another girl raped by a gendarmerie,<sup>11</sup> and the subjection of two minors to sexual slavery, one in January<sup>12</sup> and one in February.<sup>13</sup> According to reporting by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), 52 people were subjected to conflict-related sexual violence between April and June—18 of whom were girls. State actors were attributed responsibility for 28 percent of the total cases.<sup>14</sup> MINUSCA verified that in June alone, Government Forces raped two girls, with one perpetrator transmitting HIV to the 15-year-old victim.<sup>15</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate to determine whether listing is warranted for this grave violation in the Secretary-General's upcoming report.

## Colombia

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

## Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups

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

In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, 32 verified cases of killing or maiming children were attributed to FARC-EP dissident groups.<sup>16</sup> In 2023, FARC-EP dissidents continued to be implicated as responsible for killing and maiming children. In the sixth report of the Secretary-General on CAAC in Colombia, which covers the period from July 2021 to June 2023, FARC-EP dissident groups were responsible for the killing and maiming of 41 children.<sup>17</sup> The UN Verification Mission in Colombia documented three children killed by FARC-EP dissidents in 2023 for attempting to flee after being forcibly recruited.<sup>18</sup> Other sources document the number of children killed in this incident as four and detail that they belonged to the Murui community of Putumayo.<sup>19</sup> In one case reported by a local news source and verified by local civil society, the body of a boy and his father were found on December 4, after being kidnapped by FARC-EP dissidents.<sup>20</sup> Monitoring by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recorded eight incidents of killing or maiming children by FARC-EP dissident groups in 2023. Four children were killed in these incidents, one as young as four years old, and a further four children were maimed.<sup>21</sup>

10 UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), 'Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation - February 2023' para 25; and MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation - January 2023' para 25.

11 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation - January 2023' para 25.

12 UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Central African Republic: Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic, Yao Agbetse' (September 11, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/77, para 38.

13 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation - February 2023' paras 13 and 24.

14 MINUSCA, 'Human Rights Quarterly Brief on the Central African Republic: April - June 2023' 5.

15 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: Human Rights Situation - June 2023' para 16.

16 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 42.

17 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/161, para 28.

18 UNSC, 'United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 27, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/477, paras 6 and 80.

19 Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) dataset <[www.acledata.com/](http://www.acledata.com/)> (accessed March 9, 2024) Event ID COL20608.

20 Sebastián Rairán, 'Asesinan a familia secuestrada en Valle del Cauca: esto es lo que se sabe' (*Infobae*, December 4, 2023) <[www.infobae.com/colombia/2023/12/04/asesinan-a-familia-secuestrada-en-valle-del-cauca-esto-es-lo-que-se-sabe/](http://www.infobae.com/colombia/2023/12/04/asesinan-a-familia-secuestrada-en-valle-del-cauca-esto-es-lo-que-se-sabe/)> (accessed April 4, 2024).

21 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 'Situación Humanitaria Colombia' <<https://monitor.unocha.org/colombia>> (accessed March 18, 2024) Event ID 233, 1600, 2755, 2046, 1948, 2389, 2596, and 3175.

In one case, a 15-year-old student was kidnapped and tortured with a sharp weapon by FARC-EP dissidents who attempted to demand a ransom for his release.<sup>22</sup>

## Clan del Golfo (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) (AGC)

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

In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, the UN found AGC responsible for two verified incidents of attacks on schools or hospitals and one incident of the military use of a school in 2022.<sup>23</sup> Reports of AGC's perpetration of this grave violation appear to have increased in 2023, in particular, targeted attacks against teachers. As reported in a database managed by OCHA, in May 2023, at least 20 teachers from the Puerto Olaya educational institution were threatened or tortured by AGC members in their classrooms.<sup>24</sup> In addition, both Insecurity Insight and Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) have documented a teacher in Yolombo who was shot and killed in September in front of his students and their parents by AGC members.<sup>25</sup>

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

*In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, 15 non-state armed groups 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 2024 report on CAAC.*

## Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC)

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

In 2022, the UN verified the FARDC as the perpetrators of 53 incidents of killing or maiming children.<sup>26</sup> This trend continued in 2023. According to monitoring by the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting, between December 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023, Congolese security forces were responsible for at least 21 cases of killing and maiming children, though the type of security force actor was not specified.<sup>27</sup> The UN Joint Human Rights Office also documented five incidents between June 2022 and May 2023 of FARDC launching attacks on internally displaced persons' camps in Ituri, with an unknown number of child casualties.<sup>28</sup> ACLED recorded four additional cases that occurred between September and November 2023 where two children were killed and another two wounded by FARDC soldiers.<sup>29</sup>

## Iraq

*Da'esh (formerly listed as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) is listed for all five "trigger" grave violations against children in the Secretary-General's 2023 CAAC report.*

## Mali

*Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), including Ansar Eddine, and Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), part of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad, are listed for recruitment and use and rape and other forms of sexual violence in the*

22 *ibid* Event ID 2046.

23 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, paras 44 and 45.

24 UN OCHA, 'Situacion Humanitaria Colombia' <<https://monitor.unocha.org/colombia>> (accessed March 18, 2024) Event ID 1230.

25 Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 41970; and ACLED dataset <[www.acledata.com/](http://www.acledata.com/)> (accessed March 9, 2024) Event ID COL22803.

26 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 59.

27 UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General' (September 21, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/691, para 56; UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General' (March 20, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/208, para 67; and UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General' (June 19, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/451, para 64.

28 UNGA, 'Human rights situation and the activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (August 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/73, para 22.

29 ACLED dataset <[www.acledata.com/](http://www.acledata.com/)> (accessed March 9, 2024) Event ID DRC30834, DRC30571, DRC30681, and DRC31111.

Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. In addition, Platform, including affiliated groups, is listed for recruitment and use. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC.

## Malian armed forces and affiliated forces

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

The UN verified 17 children killed or maimed by Malian armed forces in 2022, and three additional cases where operations were conducted jointly with foreign security personnel.<sup>30</sup> 2023 saw the reported number of attacks on civilians by the Malian armed forces increase, usually within the context of operations against non-state armed groups. Human Rights Watch documented at least 17 cases of children killed or maimed by the actions of the Malian armed forces.<sup>31</sup> In addition to those documented by Human Rights Watch, ACLED recorded a minimum of 63 children who were killed or maimed by Malian armed forces,<sup>32</sup> many as a result of airstrikes. In one incident on November 8, airstrikes by the Malian air force on Kidal allegedly killed eight children and caused an additional 21 to require urgent medical care.<sup>33</sup>

Notably, Wagner forces reportedly accompanied the Malian armed forces in multiple attacks which resulted in child casualties, with nine of the incidents of killing and maiming children recorded by ACLED being attributed to Malian armed forces and Wagner concurrently.<sup>34</sup>

## Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), including Ansar Eddine

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

In his 2023 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General found JNIM responsible for 43 incidents of killing and maiming children in 2022. In 2023, this pattern has reportedly continued. Human Rights Watch documented a minimum of 39 children killed or maimed by JNIM forces across two attacks—one attack on a passenger boat on the Niger River in September that killed 24 children and injured nine,<sup>35</sup> and another explosion on the town of Sévaré that destroyed residential homes on April 22.<sup>36</sup> In separate incidences, at least 21 children were reportedly killed or maimed by JNIM, as recorded by ACLED.<sup>37</sup>

## Myanmar

*The Myanmar armed forces (previously listed as the Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forces) are listed in the Secretary-General's 2023 CAAC report for all five "trigger" grave violations. In addition, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, the Kachin Independence Army, the Karen National Liberation Army, the Karen National Union/ Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council, the Karenni Army, the Shan State Army, and the United Wa State Army are each listed for recruitment and use. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC.*

30 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 126.

31 Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Islamist Armed Groups, Army Target Civilians' (November 1, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/mali-islamist-armed-groups-army-target-civilians](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/mali-islamist-armed-groups-army-target-civilians)> (accessed April 8, 2024); and Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: New Atrocities by Malian Army, Apparent Wagner Fighters' (July 24, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/24/mali-new-atrocities-malian-army-apparent-wagner-fighters](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/24/mali-new-atrocities-malian-army-apparent-wagner-fighters)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

32 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 8, 2024) Event ID MLI8080, MLI31630, MLI31482, MLI31272, MLI30979, MLI30981, MLI31241, MLI30481, MLI30224, MLI8354, MLI8250, MLI8113, MLI8007, MLI8035, MLI30492, MLI30324, MLI8080, and MLI30825.

33 *ibid* Event ID MLI31272.

34 *ibid* Event ID MLI30492, MLI30324, MLI8250, MLI8113, MLI8007, MLI30979, MLI30981, MLI31241, and MLI30481.

35 Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Islamist Armed Groups, Army Target Civilians' (November 1, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/mali-islamist-armed-groups-army-target-civilians](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/01/mali-islamist-armed-groups-army-target-civilians)> (accessed April 8, 2024); and UNICEF, 'UNICEF calls for the protection of children affected by violence in Mali' (September 11, 2023) <[www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/unicef-calls-protection-children-affected-violence-mali](http://www.unicef.org/wca/press-releases/unicef-calls-protection-children-affected-violence-mali)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

36 Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Mounting Islamist Armed Group Killings, Rape' (July 13, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/13/mali-mounting-islamist-armed-group-killings-rape](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/13/mali-mounting-islamist-armed-group-killings-rape)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

37 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 8, 2024) Event ID MLI31565, MLI31513, MLI30931, MLI30932, MLI30162, MLI8464, MLI7960, MLI31455, MLI30772, and MLI30662.



## People's Defense Forces (PDFs)

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

In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, the UN attributed 12 attacks on schools and hospitals to various PDFs/local defense groups.<sup>38</sup> UN reports published by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in 2022 and 2023 have noted a trend of military use of schools by the Myanmar Armed Forces, resulting in schools being targets of armed attacks by non-state armed groups, in particular by PDFs.<sup>39</sup> This trend continued in 2023. According to ACLED, collectively PDFs carried out at least 15 attacks on schools throughout 2023, 14 of which were in the context of attacks on military troops occupying the school or its grounds.<sup>40</sup> In the fifteenth incident recorded by ACLED, Kale District People's Defense Force members detained an assistant primary school teacher in August for not participating in the Civil Disobedience Movement.<sup>41</sup> Insecurity Insight corroborated this trend, documenting 26 similar incidents in 2023 where schools were attacked with grenades, bombs, drone-delivered explosives, or burnt down by various PDFs, or where teachers were arrested or harmed.<sup>42</sup>

Similar attacks on health care by PDFs have also been reported. Insecurity Insight observed that opposition groups have increasingly been using drones armed with

explosive weapons to carry out attacks on Myanmar military forces occupying hospitals and health centers, with at least 25 incidents of drone-delivered explosive weapons damaging health facilities taken over by the Myanmar military in 2023; though how many were perpetrated by PDFs is unknown.<sup>43</sup> The UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar reported 250 attacks on health care between January and August 2023; while the majority were attributed to the military, some PDFs were also identified as perpetrators in contexts where they attacked medical facilities used by military forces.<sup>44</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate the occurrence of attacks on schools and hospitals in Myanmar to identify particular PDFs who ought to be held accountable as perpetrators of this grave violation.

## Somalia

*In the Secretary-General's 2023 CAAC report, Al-Shabaab is listed for all five "trigger" violations. The Somali Federal Defence Forces and the Somali Police Force are each listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence, while Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) is listed for recruitment and use. Watchlist recommends the following regarding the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC.*

38 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 142.

39 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in Myanmar since 1 February 2022 Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (March 2, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/52/21, para 62; and UN HRC, 'Losing a Generation: How the Military Junta Is Attacking Myanmar's Children and Stealing Their Future: Conference room paper of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar' (June 14, 2022) UN Doc A/HRC/50.CRP.1, paras 99-101 and 103.

40 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 9, 2024) Event ID MMR56997, MMR55890, MMR55386, MMR55346, MMR48783, MMR47175, MMR46479, MMR46536, MMR45475, MMR44702, MMR43353, MMR52869, MMR50990, and MMR46805.

41 *ibid* Event ID MMR51660.

42 Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 41831, 41680, 41662, 41495, 41214, 41174, 40807, 40796, 40795, 40774, 40767, 40370, 40369, 40368, 40367, 40365, 40258, 40213, 40215, 40212, 39861, 40208, 39049, 38848, 38783, and 38141.

43 Insecurity Insight, 'Third Anniversary of the Myanmar Coup: Over 1,000 Attacks on Health Care' (February 2024) <[https://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MMR-Third-Anniversary-of-the-Myanmar-Coup\\_-Over-1000-Attacks-on-Health-Care.pdf](https://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/MMR-Third-Anniversary-of-the-Myanmar-Coup_-Over-1000-Attacks-on-Health-Care.pdf)> (accessed April 8, 2024) 1-2.

44 UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar: Note by the Secretary-General' (October, 12 2023) UN Doc A/78/527, para 47.

## Somaliland Forces

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

Deadly fighting between Somaliland Forces and Dhulbahante clan militia erupted on February 6, 2023, in Laascaanood, triggered by Dhulbahante clan elders issuing a declaration stating that they are no longer part of Somaliland, but governed by the Federal Government of Somalia.<sup>45</sup> OCHA reported 14 children killed or maimed during the crises between February 6 and March 9.<sup>46</sup>

Other sources reported high numbers of civilian casualties but did not specify whether or how many were children. For example, the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia recorded 306 casualties in Laascaanood and surrounding areas between February 8, and June 7, 36 of which were deaths.<sup>47</sup> In one incident on the first day of fighting, a 7-year-old girl was killed instantly when she was hit in the head by a large piece of shrapnel.<sup>48</sup>

While many sources failed to attribute the attacks and ensuing grave violations to one of the warring parties, Amnesty International noted that the attacks that caused the greatest number of civilian casualties came from the eastern side of the city where the Somaliland Forces were based, thus concluding that Somaliland security forces were behind the indiscriminate shelling as part of their efforts to recapture the city from Dhulbahante forces and/or a tactic to encourage a surrender.<sup>49</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate this conflict to verify attribution for these acts of killing and maiming children and determine whether listing is warranted for this grave violation in the Secretary-General's upcoming report.

## South Sudan

*The South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF) are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abductions in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition - pro-Machar (SPLA-IO) is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abductions. Watchlist recommends the following regarding the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report.*

### Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Kit-Gwang (SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang)

#### Recommendation to List – Recruitment and Use

In 2023, the Kit-Gwang faction of the SPLM/A-IO splintered from the main group (or 'Machar faction'). At the time—and at present—SPLM/A-IO was listed for recruitment and use; however, since the splintering of the group, SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang has not been listed. In the Secretary-General's 2023 report, the UN verified that SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang recruited or used 27 children in 2022.<sup>50</sup> Reports of recruitment and use of children by this armed group have persisted. SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang was documented by the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting as committing nine grave violations against children between February 16 and May 31, 2023; though the type of violation was not specified.<sup>51</sup>

45 Lasanod Declaration (February 5, 2023) available at: <<https://twitter.com/MohamedSelh/status/1622487101873815553?s=20>> (accessed April 8, 2024).

46 UN OCHA, 'Somalia: Flash update on the situation in Laas Caanood, Sool Region #3 (Revised)' (March 9, 2023) 2.

47 UNSC, 'Situation in Somalia: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 15, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/443, para 9; and UNGA, 'Report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Somalia, Isha Dyfan' (August 21, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/78, para 53.

48 Amnesty International, 'Somaliland: Urgent investigation needed as fighting takes heavy toll on civilians in Las Anod' (April 20, 2023) <[www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/somaliland-conflict/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/04/somaliland-conflict/)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

49 *ibid.*

50 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 165.

51 UNSC, 'Situation in Somalia: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 15, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/443, para 79.

In the Secretary-General's February 2023 report on South Sudan, SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang was found responsible for 25 incidents of recruitment and use of children between December 1, 2022 and February 15, 2023.<sup>52</sup> As the majority of available reporting does not disaggregate incidents into different SPLM/A-IO factions, the incidents of recruitment and use by SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang documented above may not capture the full extent of this violation.

### **Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abduction**

In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, the UN found SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang responsible for 33 incidents of abducting children.<sup>53</sup> Between December 1, 2022, and February 15, 2023, the Secretary-General's periodic reports on South Sudan have documented 16 children abducted by SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang.<sup>54</sup>

## **National Salvation Front (NAS)**

### **Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abduction**

The UN verified 10 incidents of child abduction by NAS in 2022, according to the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC.<sup>55</sup> Reports of this grave violation by NAS increased in 2023, owing in part to the collapse of a local ceasefire agreement with SSPDF.<sup>56</sup> Between December 1, 2022, and February 15, 2023, five verified abductions of children were attributed to the NAS.<sup>57</sup> Covering April to June 2023, a further nine incidents of child abduction

by NAS were verified by the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS),<sup>58</sup> involving seven boys and two girls.<sup>59</sup> UNMISS attributed some of the abductions to a splinter faction of NAS led by General John Kenyi Luburon.

## **Sudan**

*Five armed groups are listed for the recruitment and use of children in the Secretary-General's 2023 CAAC report: Justice and Equality Movement, Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC.*

In April 2023, heavy fighting broke out between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces—two parties who are not currently listed for grave violations against children by the Secretary-General. The violence continued throughout 2023, and according to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, has been marked by indiscriminate attacks in densely populated areas<sup>60</sup> and targeted attacks on civilians and civilian objects by both parties,<sup>61</sup> including grave violations against children.

52 UNSC, 'Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (February 22, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/135, para 74.

53 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 169.

54 UNSC, 'Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (February 22, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/135, para 74.

55 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 169.

56 UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), 'Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians: April – June 2023' <[www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/brief-on-violence-affecting-civilians-april-june-2023.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/brief-on-violence-affecting-civilians-april-june-2023.pdf)> (accessed April 8, 2024) 3.

57 UNSC, 'Situation in South Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (February 22, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/135, para 74.

58 UNMISS, 'Brief on Violence Affecting Civilians: April – June 2023' <[www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/brief-on-violence-affecting-civilians-april-june-2023.pdf](http://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2023-12/brief-on-violence-affecting-civilians-april-june-2023.pdf)> (accessed April 8, 2024) 3.

59 UNGA, 'Technical assistance and capacity-building for South Sudan: Report of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 15, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/77, para 9.

60 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 18; and Explosive Weapons Monitor, 'Fragments: Explosive Weapons Monitor Quarterly' (September 2023) 1(1).

61 UNSC, 'Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (November 13, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/861, para 24.

## Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF)

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), as of December 8, 2023, at least 12,260 people had been killed, and a further 33,000 injured, in Sudan.<sup>62</sup> The SAF were the predominant party conducting airstrikes in 2023; the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS) recorded that between May 7 and August 20, 327 civilians were killed in airstrikes and 294 injured.<sup>63</sup> UNITAMS does not specify the number of child casualties, but it confirms that children were among those killed or maimed. In one representative incident, SAF fighter jets fired missiles at a market killing 30 civilians, including children.<sup>64</sup> In another incident on August 22, women and children were killed in South Nyala while sheltering under the Taiba bridge from SAF shelling. Reports of the number of civilians killed in this incident vary from 26 to 41;<sup>65</sup> however, the Panel of Experts on the Sudan notes that the victims were mainly women and children.<sup>66</sup>

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

Attacks on schools in the context of the conflict between SAF and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have been widely documented, causing a crisis point in the education system, with 10,400 schools forced to close,<sup>67</sup> and 19 million children not in school as of December 2023.<sup>68</sup>

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) recorded widespread destruction, damage, looting, or occupation of civilian objects, including 52 educational facilities between April and October.<sup>69</sup> Similarly, attacks on health care have exacerbated in 2023, with the Protection Cluster documenting 125 conflict-affected hospitals.<sup>70</sup> WHO has verified 60 attacks on health care by warring parties between the commencement of fighting on April 15 and December 15.<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, Insecurity Insight identified 267 attacks on Sudan's health care system caused by fighting between SAF and RSF from April 15, 2023 to January 3, 2024.<sup>72</sup>

While the above sources do not attribute perpetrators, both SAF and RSF are implicated in the perpetration of these grave violations. Four incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals were attributed specifically to SAF in 2023. In April and May, SAF conducted airstrikes on two health facilities in Khartoum: an RSF clinic and the East Nile hospital, respectively.<sup>73</sup> In addition, Insecurity Insight recorded two SAF airstrikes on schools in October.<sup>74</sup>

Watchlist recommends the Secretary-General further investigate the occurrence of attacks on schools and hospitals in Sudan and verify whether SAF should be held accountable as perpetrators of this grave violation.

62 UN Geneva, 'Press Briefing by the United Nations Information Service' (December 8, 2023) <[www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/bi-weekly-briefing/2023/12/press-briefing-United-Nations-Information-Service-1](http://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/bi-weekly-briefing/2023/12/press-briefing-United-Nations-Information-Service-1)> (accessed April 8, 2024).

63 UNSC, 'Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (August 31, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/644, para 26.

64 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 19.

65 *ibid* para 23; and UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 111.

66 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 111.

67 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 86; and UN OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Sudan' (December 2023) 23.

68 UN OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Sudan' (December 2023) 3.

69 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 'Protection Brief Darfur Region' (October 2023) 4.

70 Protection Sector Sudan, 'At a Glance: Protection Impacts of the Conflict – Update No.22' (December 14, 2023) 1.

71 World Health Organization (WHO), 'Sudan Health Emergency: Situation Report No. 4' (15 December 2023) 1.

72 Insecurity Insight, 'Attacks on Health Care in Sudan: 24 January-06 February 2024' (February 2024) <<https://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/21.-24-January-06-February-2024-Attacks-on-Health-Care-in-Sudan.pdf>> (accessed April 4, 2024).

73 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, paras 19 and 25.

74 Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 41993 and 41992.

## Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and allied armed groups

### Recommendation to List – Recruitment and Use

In 2023, the recruitment and use of children has reportedly proliferated in Sudan. Both SAF and RSF engaged in recruitment drives that targeted children, and witnesses report seeing children in the ranks of both groups.<sup>75</sup> However, the scale of child recruitment by RSF was higher than SAF and indicates a clear pattern of this grave violation.<sup>76</sup> The National Council for Child Welfare reported that RSF was responsible for forcibly recruiting 6,750 children in 2023.<sup>77</sup> UNITAMS has also observed a trend of child recruitment, though their verified cases represent a much more modest figure, with 13 boys confirmed as being recruited by RSF between May 7 and August 20.<sup>78</sup> 2023 also saw a pattern of RSF members approaching tribal leaders—in particular Arab tribes—to recruit young boys.<sup>79</sup>

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

OHCHR observed a pattern of unlawful killing of civilians by RSF in 2023 – including children.<sup>80</sup> RSF’s violence carried an ethnic bias, with Masalit communities facing greater risk of killing and maiming due to their ethnicity.<sup>81</sup> In El Geneina alone, estimates of between 10,000 and 15,000 people were killed by RSF and allied militias.<sup>82</sup>

In one particular incident, as a convoy of thousands of people and livestock moved to Ardamatta in search of safety, RSF and allied militia indiscriminately fired at the convoy.<sup>83</sup> Survivors estimate the death toll at 1,000 with children among them. RSF shot at civilians fleeing to the town of Adre in Chad. UNHCR recorded 36,563 people who had fled to Adre by June 30 due to the conflict – noting most were women and children.<sup>84</sup> Among these people at least 800 were injured with gun or stab wounds, including children.<sup>85</sup> A witness identified by the Panel of Experts on the Sudan recalled seeing the bodies of 105 children along the road to Adre.<sup>86</sup>

### Recommendation to List – Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

The UN verified five incidents of sexual violence of girls by RSF in 2022, according to the Secretary-General’s 2023 report on CAAC.<sup>87</sup> RSF were listed in the Secretary-General’s 2023 sexual violence in conflict report alongside SAF,<sup>88</sup> however, in 2023 such violations, and their targeting towards children, drastically increased and were reported in all areas under RSF’s control.<sup>89</sup> OCHA documented 63 sexual violence cases against girls aged 11 to 17 from mid-April until December.<sup>90</sup> While perpetrators of these grave violations were unattributed, other sources indicate that RSF was the most prolific

75 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (15 January 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 68.

76 *ibid* preamble.

77 ACLED dataset, <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 12, 2024), Event ID SUD22486.

78 UNSC, 'Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (August 31, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/644, para 30.

79 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 67.

80 *ibid* para 36.

81 Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA), 'Silent Weapons, Loudest Wounds: Addressing the Crisis of Sexual Violence in Sudan' (March 2023) <[www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/report/silent-weapons-loudest-wounds-addressing-the-crisis-of-sexual-violence-in-sudan/sudan-report.pdf](http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/report/silent-weapons-loudest-wounds-addressing-the-crisis-of-sexual-violence-in-sudan/sudan-report.pdf)> (accessed April 5, 2024) 6-7.

82 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, preamble.

83 *ibid* paras 92 and 93.

84 UN OCHA, 'Chad - Humanitarian Update' (June 2023) 2.

85 *ibid*.

86 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, paras 94 – 96.

87 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 180.

88 UNSC, 'Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 22, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/413, Annex.

89 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, paras 65 and 66.

90 UN OCHA, 'Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan: Sudan' (December 2023) 37.

perpetrator of sexual violence in Sudan.<sup>91</sup> UN experts report hundreds of cases of sexual violence by men in RSF uniforms,<sup>92</sup> and observe the widespread use of sexual violence by RSF and allied militias on women and girls as a tool of war.<sup>93</sup> Internally displaced girls were particularly targeted by RSF and its allies, along with children of African ethnicity – in particular the Masalit community.<sup>94</sup>

The UN Country Task Force verified the rape of or sexual violence against 10 girls aged between 12 and 17 by RSF from May 7 to August 20.<sup>95</sup> Between August 21 and October 31, UNITAMS monitored 53 cases of conflict-related sexual violence involving 20 children – with the majority of incidents perpetrated by RSF and affiliated armed men.<sup>96</sup> In one representative case, 16 girls were kidnapped and gang raped by armed men in an RSF house in El Geneina.<sup>97</sup>

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

As mentioned above, the conflict between RSF and SAF has driven up incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals, with both parties implicated, but a lack of sources attributing perpetrators. RSF and allied militias are responsible for looting and destroying hospitals

and medical storage facilities in El Geneina between April and December, resulting in the collapse of health services.<sup>98</sup> El Geneina's main hospital was destroyed by RSF and armed militia in April, and in May armed Arab militia entered a Medical Rescue Clinic in El Geneina, killing one doctor and 13 patients.<sup>99</sup> In May, RSF raided a school in West Darfur, spraying with bullets a classroom where citizens were sheltering.<sup>100</sup> In Central Darfur, an RSF offensive of June 22 on an SAF base led to child casualties when shells fell on a secondary school for girls.<sup>101</sup> In Khartoum, RSF occupied the East Nile Hospital in April, forcefully evacuating it,<sup>102</sup> and in May an RSF soldier shot dead a teacher.<sup>103</sup>

Watchlist recommends the Secretary-General to further investigate the occurrence of attacks on schools and hospitals in Sudan and verify whether RSF should be held accountable as a perpetrator of this grave violation.

### **Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abduction**

Cases of abduction by RSF forces and allied militia were reported in 2023. For example, 18 children were reported missing by OHCHR as of October 15; many of whom are believed to have been abducted by RSF.<sup>104</sup> The Panel of Experts on the Sudan shared reports of 16 girls abducted

91 SIHA, 'Silent Weapons, Loudest Wounds: Addressing the Crisis of Sexual Violence in Sudan' (March 2023) <[www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/report/silent-weapons-loudest-wounds-addressing-the-crisis-of-sexual-violence-in-sudan/sudan-report.pdf](http://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/report/silent-weapons-loudest-wounds-addressing-the-crisis-of-sexual-violence-in-sudan/sudan-report.pdf)> (accessed April 5, 2024) 7.

92 UN Special Procedures, 'Communication' (August 15, 2023) UN Doc AL OTH 101/2023, 2.

93 UN Special Procedures, 'Sudan: UN experts appalled by use of sexual violence as a tool of war' (November 30, 2023).

94 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, paras 46 and 47; and UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 66.

95 UNSC, 'Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (August 31, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/644, para 30.

96 UNSC, 'Situation in the Sudan and the activities of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan: Report of the Secretary-General' (November 13, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/861, para 31.

97 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 67.

98 *ibid* para 91.

99 Amnesty International, "'Death Came to Our Home" War Crimes and Civilian Suffering in Sudan' (2023) 19 and 20.

100 Human Rights Watch, 'Sudan: Darfur Town Destroyed' (July 11, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/07/11/sudan-darfur-town-destroyed)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

101 Protection Sector Sudan, 'Darfur Protection of Civilians Advocacy Note: SAF/RSF conflict in Darfur' (June 25, 2023) 2.

102 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 25.

103 Amnesty International, "'Death Came to Our Home" War Crimes and Civilian Suffering in Sudan' (2023) 16 and 17.

104 UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in the Sudan: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 29, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/29, para 63.

and taken to an RSF base where they were also sexually assaulted by multiple men.<sup>105</sup> According to data collated by ACLED, RSF abducted 66 children from Ardamatta Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camp over three consecutive days in November.<sup>106</sup>

## Syrian Arab Republic

*Da'esh (formerly listed as the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant) is listed for all five "trigger" grave violations in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. Government Forces, including National Defense Forces and pro-government militias, are listed for all "trigger" grave violations except abduction. Hay'at Tahrir al Sham and the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam are each listed for the 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. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC.*

## Russian Government Forces

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

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria investigated four Russian airstrikes between August and December 2023, that led to six children killed and a further nine injured.<sup>107</sup> In one case, on October 6,

two guided bombs hit residential farmers' houses in rural Idlib, killing a 3-year-old child and injuring three other children.<sup>108</sup> The same month, two children were killed and three others injured in a Russian airstrike on Saraqib IDP camp.<sup>109</sup> Internally displaced families were also hit by a Russian airstrike on August 22, injuring two children.<sup>110</sup> On December 25, three children from the same family were killed in their home by a Russian airstrike, and one further child was injured.<sup>111</sup> The Commission concluded that it had reasonable grounds to believe some of the attacks were indiscriminate and that Russian forces failed to take feasible precautions to avoid or minimize civilian deaths.<sup>112</sup>

According to ACLED, in 2023 a total of 15 airstrikes by Russian warplanes led to the killing and maiming of children.<sup>113</sup> It has been documented that Russian Government Forces committed grave violations alongside Syrian regime forces in the October 2023 escalation.<sup>114</sup> OCHA reports at least 27 children killed and 77 injured in this escalation, but it does not specify perpetrators of these grave violations.<sup>115</sup> In addition to the above detailed airstrikes in October, two children were also killed on October 27, in Al-Masbah IDP camp in airstrikes on the camp by the Russian Forces.<sup>116</sup>

105 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Sudan' (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/65, para 67.

106 ACLED dataset <www.acleddata.com/> (accessed March 12, 2024) Event ID SUD23885, SUD23666, and SUD23646.

107 UNGA, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic' (February 9, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/64, paras 41 – 46.

108 *ibid* para 43.

109 *ibid* para 45.

110 *ibid* para 42.

111 *ibid* para 46.

112 *ibid* para 47.

113 ACLED dataset <www.acleddata.com/> (accessed March 13, 2024) Event ID SYR122278, SYR122277, SYR119875, SYR119884, SYR119100, SYR119022, SYR119144, SYR119061, SYR119099, SYR119115, SYR118949, SYR116172, SYR116168, SYR114757, and SYR119574.

114 Ali Haj Suleiman and Husam Hezaber, 'Northwest Syria witnesses most intense military escalation in three years' (*Al Jazeera*, October 31, 2023) <www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/10/31/northwest-syria-witnesses-most-intense-military-escalation-in-three-years> (accessed April 5, 2024).

115 UN OCHA, 'North-Est Syria Escalation of Hostilities: Flash Update No. 4' (October 27, 2023) 1.

116 Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 43346.

## Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), including the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ)

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

The UN verified 73 incidents of killing and maiming children by SDF in the Secretary-General's CAAC report covering 2022.<sup>117</sup> In 2023, the SDF's killing and maiming of children in Syria continued. A total of 29 such incidents were recorded by ACLED that resulted in 11 children killed and 32 injured.<sup>118</sup> Thousands of boys continued to be detained in appalling conditions in SDF-run camps and prisons in Northeastern Syria for alleged affiliation with Da'esh.<sup>119</sup> Their treatment in detention may meet the threshold of maiming. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria recorded an escalation of conflict between SDF and tribal forces in August and September. The Commission verified three incidents where SDF forces killed or maimed children: in one case, during house raids, SDF killed an 11-year-old boy; in another incident, one boy was killed and a second injured by live ammunition shot from an SDF military vehicle; and in the third case, shelling of a farm by SDF injured a 10-year-old boy.<sup>120</sup>

## Turkish Government Forces

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

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria reported an 11-year-old boy killed in a Turkish drone strike, and multiple other children injured in one strike in January 2023.<sup>121</sup> Human Rights Watch reported one child losing a leg in a Turkish airstrike on October 9.<sup>122</sup> In addition to these cases, conflict monitor, Airwars, recorded ten incidents of shelling, drone strikes, or gunfire by Turkish Forces that killed a total of eight children and maimed 16 children.<sup>123</sup> ACLED reports a total of seven children killed and 22 injured by Turkish Government Forces in 2023.<sup>124</sup>

## Yemen

*The Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and attacks on schools and hospitals in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. Security Belt Forces, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees, are listed for recruitment and use.*

117 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 194.

118 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 13, 2024) Event ID SYR122531, SYR122530, SYR121743, SYR120784, SYR120496, SYR120484, SYR119813, SYR118749, SYR118386, SYR118159, SYR118113, SYR117992, SYR117873, SYR117828, SYR117869, SYR117486, SYR117769, SYR117098, SYR115807, SYR115069, SYR114091, SYR113016, SYR113017, SYR122041, SYR110892, SYR119013, SYR114735, SYR111644, and SYR112766.

119 UN Human Rights Council (HRC), 'Punishing the innocent: ending violations against children in the north-east of the Syrian Arab Republic: Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic' (March 19, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/CRP.8, 8.

120 UNGA, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic' (February 9, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/64, paras 93 and 95.

121 UNGA, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic' (August 14, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/58, para 84.

122 Human Rights Watch, 'The Full Costs of Turkey's Bombing Campaign in Northeast Syria' (November 3, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/03/full-costs-turkeys-bombing-campaign-northeast-syria](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/11/03/full-costs-turkeys-bombing-campaign-northeast-syria)> (accessed April 11, 2024).

123 Airwars, 'Civilian Casualties' (2023) <<https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/>> (accessed April 5, 2024) Incident Codes TS641, TS628, TS621, TS602, TS597, TS594, TS591, TS590, TS585, and TS584.

124 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 13, 2024) Event ID SYR122523, SYR122973, SYR119790, SYR119188, SYR119200, SYR117666, SYR116706, SYR115998, SYR115965, SYR115215, SYR114272, SYR110791, SYR110212, SYR109967, SYR122974, SYR121469, and SYR119474.



## Annex II Countries

### Burkina Faso

*Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abductions in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. In his 2023 report, the Secretary-General also listed the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) for killing and maiming children. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report.*

### Defence and Security Forces

#### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

The UN verified 152 incidents of killing and maiming children by Burkina Faso Defence and Security Forces in 2022, yet they were not listed in the Secretary-General's 2023 CAAC report.<sup>125</sup> Reports of killing and maiming of children by state forces in Burkina Faso have continued in 2023. In one incident alone, on April 20, hundreds of Defence and Security Forces carried out a six-hour operation in the village of Karma, killing over 130 civilians. Reports vary as to how many children were killed, with Human Rights Watch documenting that 45 were killed by apparent Burkinabè soldiers.<sup>126</sup> The attack was

believed to be in retaliation for attacks by Islamist armed groups earlier in the month. Further evidence of killing and maiming throughout 2023 includes three children allegedly killed by Security Forces in Gourma Province.<sup>127</sup>

Data consolidated by ACLED corroborates this trend with 12 incidents recorded in 2023—in addition to the massacre at Karma.<sup>128</sup> Three other large ground and air operations by Defence and Security Forces were documented in November and December, each with high child casualties. In one case, children were among the 200-300 reported deaths,<sup>129</sup> in another 31 victims (including children) from the Fulani community were killed,<sup>130</sup> and in the third incident a provisional death toll of 70 civilians was estimated by the regional prosecutor, mainly consisting of children, women, and the elderly.<sup>131</sup>

### Lake Chad basin

*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)—splinter groups of Boko Haram—were listed for abduction of children in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report.*

125 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 224.

126 Human Rights Watch, 'Burkina Faso: Army Linked to Massacre of 156 Civilians' (May 4, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/04/burkina-faso-army-linked-massacre-156-civilians](https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/05/04/burkina-faso-army-linked-massacre-156-civilians)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

127 UNSC, 'Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 30, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/490, para 38.

128 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](https://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 11, 2024) Event ID BFO11192, BFO11218, BFO11278, BFO10996, BFO10525, BFO10263, BFO9749, BFO9553, BFO10260, BFO9370, BFO9068, and BFO9392.

129 *ibid* Event ID BFO11218.

130 *ibid* Event ID BFO11278.

131 *ibid* Event ID BFO10996.

## Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)

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

Both JAS and ISWAP should be investigated to determine if each armed group should be listed as a perpetrator of killing and maiming children. While the Secretary-General's CAAC report makes two separate listings for these Boko Haram splinter groups, most reporting does not disaggregate by factions, thus Watchlist makes this recommendation jointly for both JAS and ISWAP.

The Lake Province of Chad, and the Far North region of Cameroon in particular, saw consistently high civilian casualties. In 2023, at least 83 civilian fatalities were attributed to Boko Haram in Chad by the UN, and 126 in the Far North of Cameroon.<sup>132</sup> However, these sources did not disaggregate child victims. In the Far North of Cameroon ACLED reports at least nine killed and two wounded by JAS and ISWAP.<sup>133</sup> Notably, the use of improvised explosive devices and mines by Boko Haram factions in the region has also led to child casualties.<sup>134</sup> In one incident in March, three children were killed and four injured when a grenade exploded.<sup>135</sup>

## Nigeria

*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)—splinter groups of Boko Haram—were listed for all five “trigger” grave violations in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC.*

## Philippines

*The Abu Sayyaf Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and New People's Army were listed for recruitment and use in the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC.*

## Ukraine

*In his 2023 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General listed, for the first time, the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups for two grave violations: killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report.*

## Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups

### Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abduction

In the Secretary General's 2023 CAAC report, the UN report, the UN found Russian armed forces responsible for 91 incidents of child abduction and a further 46 incidents of forcibly transferring children from Ukraine to Russia.<sup>136</sup> Though reports vary in number, the large-scale displacement of Ukrainian children is not disputed by either Ukrainian or Russian authorities.<sup>137</sup> The Humanitarian Research Lab of the Yale School of Public Health has documented over 6,000 Ukrainian children transferred to Russian custodial facilities and suspects the actual figure to be significantly higher.<sup>138</sup>

132 UNSC, 'The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa: Report of the Secretary-General' (November 30, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/934, para 23; and UNSC, 'The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa: Report of the Secretary-General' (May 31, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/389, para 21.

133 ACLED dataset <www.acleddata.com/> (accessed March 13, 2024) Event ID CA08321, CA07655, CA07186, CA07862, CA07168, CA07767, CA07568, and CA07027.

134 UNSC, 'The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa: Report of the Secretary-General' (May 31, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/389, para 38.

135 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: Extrême-Nord - Rapport de situation No. 30' (March 2023) 3.

136 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 318.

137 Prof. Veronika Bilkova, Dr. Cecilie Hellestveit and Dr. Elina Šteinerte for Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 'Report on Violations and Abuses of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, Related to the Forcible Transfer and/or Deportation of Ukrainian Children to the Russian Federation' (May 4, 2023) 1.

138 Khoshnood, Kaveh, Nathaniel A. Raymond and Caitlin N. Howarth et al. for Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health, 'Russia's Systematic Program for the Re-education and Adoption of Ukraine's Children' (February 14, 2023) 5.

Ukrainian authorities record the figure of transferred children as 19,546.<sup>139</sup> The majority of forced transfers and deportations took place in 2022, with some also reported by Yale's Humanitarian Research Lab in January 2023.<sup>140</sup> However, failure to return or relocate the children back to their parents or guardians in Ukraine constitutes a continuation of the forced transfer or deportation. The majority of these children are assumed to remain in the location they were transferred to considering the very low reported numbers of returned children. According to OHCHR only 19 Ukrainian children returned between August and November 2023<sup>141</sup> and *Reuters* reports a further six brokered by Qatari mediation.<sup>142</sup> The Ukrainian Government reports that there have been only 388 child returnees in total since February 2022.<sup>143</sup>

While forced transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups is widely reported and widely analyzed as

amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and/or violations of international humanitarian and human rights law,<sup>144</sup> the UN has not explicitly identified the deportations and transfers as the grave violation of abduction.<sup>145</sup> The non-consensual transfer or deportation of children will only amount to the grave violation of abduction, pursuant to the OSRSG-CAAC's working definition, if the intention was clearly exploitative.<sup>146</sup> The exploitative nature of at least some of Russia's transfers and deportations has become evident through reports of children who have since returned,<sup>147</sup> including indoctrination through re-education,<sup>148</sup> and using children for propaganda.<sup>149</sup> While it is probable that at least some cases of Russia's forced transfers/deportations of children may amount to abduction, Watchlist is unable to independently make this determination. Therefore, further investigation by the UN is required to determine whether listing is warranted for abduction in the Secretary-General's upcoming report.

139 Ukraine Ministry of Reintegration, 'Children of War' <<https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

140 Khoshnood, Kaveh, Nathaniel A. Raymond and Caitlin N. Howarth et al. for Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health, 'Russia's Systematic Program for the Re-education and Adoption of Ukraine's Children' (February 14, 2023) 5.

141 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 'Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 1 August to 30 November 2023' (December 12, 2023) para 57.

142 Andrew Mills and Max Hunder, 'Six Ukrainian children to be returned from Russia through Qatari mediation' (*Reuters*, December 5, 2023) <[www.reuters.com/world/europe/embargoed-six-ukrainian-children-be-returned-russia-through-qatari-mediation-2023-12-05/](http://www.reuters.com/world/europe/embargoed-six-ukrainian-children-be-returned-russia-through-qatari-mediation-2023-12-05/)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

143 Ukraine Ministry of Reintegration, 'Children of War' <<https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

144 UNGA, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine' (September 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/52/62, para 70; UNGA, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine' (March 15, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/52/62, para 102; Prof. Veronika Bilkova, Dr. Cecilie Hellestveit and Dr. Elina Šteinerte for OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, 'Report on Violations and Abuses of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, Related to the Forcible Transfer and/or Deportation of Ukrainian Children to the Russian Federation' (May 4, 2023) 76 – 77; UN HRC, 'Conference room paper of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine' (August 29, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/52/CRP.4, para 733; UN HRC, 'Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine' (March 5, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/66, para 97; and International Criminal Court (ICC), 'Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova' (March 17, 2023) <[www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and](http://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

145 Khoshnood, Kaveh, Nathaniel A. Raymond and Caitlin N. Howarth et al. for Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health, 'Russia's Systematic Program for the Re-education and Adoption of Ukraine's Children' (February 14, 2023) 8.

146 OSRSG-CAAC and UNICEF, 'Guidance note on Abduction' (2022) 14-15.

147 Carlotta Gall, Oleksandr Chubko and Cora Engelbrecht, 'Ukraine's Stolen Children' (*New York Times*, December 27, 2023) <[www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/26/world/europe/ukraine-war-children-russia.html](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/26/world/europe/ukraine-war-children-russia.html)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

148 U.S. Department of State, 'The Kremlin's War Against Ukraine's Children' (August 24, 2023) <[www.state.gov/the-kremlins-war-against-ukraines-children/](http://www.state.gov/the-kremlins-war-against-ukraines-children/)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

149 *ibid*; and Sarah El Deeb, Anastasiia Shvets and Elizaveta Tilna, 'How Moscow grabs Ukrainian kids and makes them Russians' (*AP News*, March 17, 2023) <<https://apnews.com/article/ukrainian-children-russia-7493cb22c9086c6293c1ac7986d85ef6>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

# Situations in the Report/ Parties Not Yet Listed

The Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC further includes information on the situation of children in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, 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 two situations of concern (Haiti and Niger) would be added with immediate effect in view of the gravity and number of grave violations emanating from these contexts. 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

Armed Separatist Groups in the Northwest and Southwest of the country continued their campaign of attacks on education in 2023. They reportedly forcibly closed schools, set fire to school buildings, abducted teachers

and students, imposed boycotts on public schools through broad threats to students, parents and teachers, and killed or injured staff.<sup>150</sup> In its reporting, OCHA documented over 25 incidents of attacks on schools in Northwest and Southwest Cameroon, suspected of being perpetrated by armed separatist groups in 2023.<sup>151</sup> Six educational staff were killed by armed groups in 2023.<sup>152</sup> ACLED documents three teachers killed in the Northeast by armed separatists affiliated with the Ambazonia Defence Forces,<sup>153</sup> and a further 11 abducted.<sup>154</sup>

A spike in attacks on schools by armed separatist groups occurred over a five-day forced closure of schools in February to boycott National Youth Day,<sup>155</sup> as well as throughout a two-week lockdown imposed in the Northwest and Southwest regions in September to prevent children from returning to school.<sup>156</sup> According to OCHA and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), in 2023, 41 percent of schools were not operational,<sup>157</sup> with insecurity the primary cause.

- 150 Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2024: Cameroon - Events of 2023' <[www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/cameroon](http://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/cameroon)> (accessed April 5, 2024); UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 58' (September-October 2023) 2; and Global Centre for the Responsibility to Respect (GCR2P), 'R2P Monitor, Issue 67' (December 1, 2023) 4.
- 151 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 60' (December 2023) 2; and UNICEF, 'Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4' (February 20, 2024) 2.
- 152 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 51' (February 2023) 2; OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 59' (November 2023) 2; GCR2P, 'R2P Monitor, Issue 67' (December 1, 2023); and GCR2P, 'Cameroon' (February 29, 2024) <[www.globalr2p.org/countries/cameroon/](http://www.globalr2p.org/countries/cameroon/)> (accessed April 5, 2024).
- 153 ACLED dataset <[www.acleddata.com/](http://www.acleddata.com/)> (accessed March 13, 2024) Event ID CAO7728 and CAO7047.
- 154 *ibid* Event ID CAO8351, CAO8212, CAO8060, and CAO7274.
- 155 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 51' (February 2023) 2; and Danish Refugee Council, 'Cameroon - Protection Monitoring Quarterly Report: Southwest Cameroon (January-March 2023)' (2023) 16.
- 156 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 58' (September-October 2023) 2; and Paul Njie, 'Cameroon's SDF denounce separatists' attempts to disrupt return to school' (*BBC News*, September 12, 2023) <[www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0zdpn6g42o](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cn0zdpn6g42o)> (accessed April 5, 2024).
- 157 UN OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 60' (December 2023) 2; and UNICEF, 'Cameroon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 4' (February 20, 2024) 2.

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

## Haiti

In his 2023 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General added Haiti as a situation of concern with immediate effect, in view of the gravity and number of violations reported and, where possible, verified in Haiti between September 2022 and March 2023, namely: recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, and denial of humanitarian access.<sup>158</sup> In Haiti, armed gangs exercise violence against civilians as a means of territorial control. Such violence has intensified in 2023, and the resulting gravity of insecurity was noted by the Secretary-General<sup>159</sup> and the International Committee of the Red Cross<sup>160</sup> as reaching levels comparable to armed conflict. Indeed, various UN entities and international observers have begun to label Haiti's organized criminal gangs as "armed groups."<sup>161</sup>

Armed gangs in Haiti regularly commit violations against children, including all five "trigger" grave violations.<sup>162</sup> However, incident reporting remains limited due to access constraints caused by the country's insecurity,<sup>163</sup> and attributing grave violations to specific perpetrators remains a challenge. As a result, Watchlist makes the

following recommendations grouped under one category of various armed gangs, noting that prior to listing, verified information should be sourced attributing grave violations to specific, named perpetrators.

### **Various armed gangs including those aligned with the G9 Family and Allies led by Jimmy Chérizier ("G9 Alliance") and the opposing G-Pèp Alliance, the Gran Grif gang, as well as the vigilante movement known as Bwa Kalé**

Instability in Haiti has escalated amidst clashes between two main criminal gang coalitions in the country's capital—the G-Pèp Alliance and the G9 Alliance<sup>164</sup>—who are estimated to control 80 percent of the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area.<sup>165</sup> In 2023, armed gang violence spread beyond the capital to the Artibonite Department,<sup>166</sup> where the most prolific perpetrator of grave violations is the Gran Grif gang. In September 2023, the coalitions announced a truce that broke down after a few days;<sup>167</sup> however, indication of intention to join forces sparks concern. In response to the gang violence, a citizen vigilante movement known as Bwa Kalé emerged which has also led to violations against children and compounded the insecurity of the country.

158 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 349.

159 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General' (April 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/274, para 74.

160 International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), 'Haiti: Severe levels of insecurity must not be an obstacle to much needed humanitarian aid' (February 8, 2023) <[www.icrc.org/en/document/haiti-severe-levels-insecurity-must-not-be-obstacle-much-needed-humanitarian-aid](http://www.icrc.org/en/document/haiti-severe-levels-insecurity-must-not-be-obstacle-much-needed-humanitarian-aid)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

161 See for example, UN OCHA, 'Haiti: Humanitarian note - New paradigm #1: The impact of violence' (March 31, 2023) 1.

162 UNSC, 'Resolution 2699 (2023)' (October 2, 2023) UN Doc S/RES/2699 (2023) preamble.

163 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General' (April 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/274, para 38.

164 Human Rights Watch, 'Haiti: Surge in Violent Abuses' (August 14, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/14/haiti-surge-violent-abuses](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/08/14/haiti-surge-violent-abuses)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

165 UN OCHA, 'Haiti: Humanitarian note - New paradigm #1: The impact of violence' (31 March 2023) 1.

166 *ibid.*

167 Security Council Report, 'What's In Blue - Haiti: Private Meeting' (March 5, 2024) <<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/03/haiti-private-meeting.php>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

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

OHCHR estimates that between 30 and 50 percent of gang members in Haiti are children.<sup>168</sup> In 2023, the UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) interviewed 10 boys aged between 15 and 17 who had been recruited to gangs and ascertained their roles as informers (known locally as ‘antennae’) as well as facilitators of kidnappings and robberies.<sup>169</sup> Children are also used by gangs to transport ammunition and load weapons in addition to committing attacks,<sup>170</sup> as well as for household chores and domestic work.<sup>171</sup> The Secretary-General has emphasized that both boys and girls are vulnerable to recruitment and use by armed gangs, highlighting one incident on 16 October where four girls were used for sexual services.<sup>172</sup> The recruitment of children into armed gangs is noted as particularly prolific in the neighborhoods of Cité Soleil and Port-au-Prince.<sup>173</sup> In his report of March 2024, the High Commissioner for Human Rights indicated that recruitment of children was a critical concern and emphasized the difficulties for child recruits to leave gangs, including incidents of execution after a child has attempted to leave.<sup>174</sup>

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

Armed gangs launched indiscriminate armed assaults on the citizen population, taking the lives of children,<sup>175</sup> even as they fled from the violence.<sup>176</sup> Throughout 2023, 141 children were killed in gang-related homicides across Haiti – 93 boys and 48 girls;<sup>177</sup> and at least 55 children were injured.<sup>178</sup> Armed gangs inflicted violence on children both directly through executions, indiscriminate shooting, and sniper attacks, as well as through cross-fire and stray bullets.<sup>179</sup> Cité Soleil was a particularly deadly location for children, with 29 children killed there by gunfire from gangs in the first six months of 2023.<sup>180</sup> Further, in August and September, six children were killed by gang members in Cité Soleil for ‘bad behavior’ – including an eight year old boy.<sup>181</sup>

The G9 Alliance in particular should be investigated for its reported perpetration of killing and maiming children. Six children were killed by the G9 Alliance at the Carrefour la Mort (Crossroad of Death) in the capital between January and June 2023.<sup>182</sup> Human Rights Watch also documented one incident in March 2023 where a G9-allied gang set fire to a house in Bel-Air, burning to death a five-year-old child who was inside.<sup>183</sup>

168 UNGA, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (September 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/79, para 49.

169 UN Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) ‘Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: July - September 2023’ (October 27, 2023) 5; and UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (October 16, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/768, para 33.

170 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (April 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/274, para 38.

171 UN HRC, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/76, para 14; and UNSC, ‘Final report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2653 (2022)’ (September 15, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/647, para 138.

172 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/62, para 37.

173 *ibid* para 31.

174 UN HRC, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/76, para 14.

175 See for example, BINUH ‘Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: July - September 2023’ (October 27, 2023) 3; and BINUH, ‘Human Rights Situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April – June 2023’ (August 31, 2023) 3.

176 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (July 3, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/492, para 31.

177 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/62, para 11.

178 UN HRC, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/76, para 18.

179 *ibid* para 20.

180 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (July 3, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/492, para 37.

181 BINUH ‘Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: July - September 2023’ (27 October 2023) 4.

182 Human Rights Watch, ‘“Living a Nightmare”: Haiti Needs an Urgent Rights-Based Response to Escalating Crisis’ (August 14, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/report/2023/08/14/living-nightmare/haiti-needs-urgent-rights-based-response-escalating-crisis](http://www.hrw.org/report/2023/08/14/living-nightmare/haiti-needs-urgent-rights-based-response-escalating-crisis)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

183 *ibid*.

Children in Haiti are also killed and maimed for being perceived as (rival) gang members. For example, the Bwa Kalé movement is responsible for the lynching of at least two children between January and September 2023.<sup>184</sup>

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

Armed gangs in Haiti use rape and sexual violence as a weapon—in particular collective rape and mutilation—with children among the victims.<sup>185</sup> The Secretary-General described the rape of women and girls in gang-controlled areas of Haiti as “pervasive.”<sup>186</sup> The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Haiti reported “over 8,000 cases of killings, lynchings, or rape, including group rape of women and young girls” in the first 11 months of 2023.<sup>187</sup> However, sexual violence in Haiti is severely underreported due to stigmatization and fear of retaliation;<sup>188</sup> therefore, the incidents recorded only represent a small part of a much broader pattern of abuse. In the first four months of 2023, BINUH verified six incidents of rape of girls between 14 and 16 years of age by gangs in Port-au-Prince.<sup>189</sup> In July, one child was collectively raped by six gang members after being abducted from a public transport vehicle.<sup>190</sup> In October,

gang members raped two girls aged 14 and 15 in their homes in Liancourt,<sup>191</sup> and used four girls used for sexual services (as detailed above under recruitment).<sup>192</sup> The Child Protection Cluster reported 84 cases of sexual violence against girls in October alone, though whether they are attributable to armed gangs is unspecified.<sup>193</sup> Perpetrators of sexual violence against children, though rarely identified, include the G9 Alliance in Cité Soleil,<sup>194</sup> and the Gran Grif gang who raped three children aged between 12 and 14 in front of their families.<sup>195</sup>

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

Both schools and hospitals have been targeted by armed gangs in Haiti in 2023. OHCHR reported attacks on education by armed gangs, including the total destruction of 30 schools in the Artibonite Department and the ransacking of a further 16.<sup>196</sup> In April 2023, OCHA estimated that 48 percent of hospitals in the Port-au-Prince metropolitan area were under gang influence or control.<sup>197</sup> As a result of gang attacks, multiple health facilities have been forced to close, including the Albert Schweitzer hospital in Deschapelles, Artibonite which served over 700,000 people and was shuttered due to attacks by the Gran Grif gang.<sup>198</sup>

184 BINUH and UN OHCHR, ‘Criminal Violence Extends Beyond Port-Au-Prince: The Situation in Lower Artibonite from January 2022 to October 2023’ (November 2023) 26.

185 UNGA, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (September 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/79, para 9; and BINUH, ‘Human Rights Situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April – June 2023’ (August 31, 2023) 5.

186 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (July 3, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/492, para 10.

187 UN Geneva, ‘Press Briefing by the United Nations Information Service’ (December 8, 2023) <[www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/bi-weekly-briefing/2023/12/press-briefing-united-nations-information-service-1](http://www.ungeneva.org/en/news-media/bi-weekly-briefing/2023/12/press-briefing-united-nations-information-service-1)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

188 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (April 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/274 para 44; and UNGA, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (September 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/79, para 50.

189 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (April 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/274, para 43.

190 BINUH ‘Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: July - September 2023’ (27 October 2023) 5.

191 UNSC, ‘United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General’ (January 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/62, para 34.

192 *ibid* para 37.

193 UNICEF, ‘Haiti Humanitarian Situation Report No. 8’ (October 2023) 2.

194 Human Rights Watch, ‘“Living a Nightmare”: Haiti Needs an Urgent Rights-Based Response to Escalating Crisis’ (August 14, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/report/2023/08/14/living-nightmare/haiti-needs-urgent-rights-based-response-escalating-crisis](http://www.hrw.org/report/2023/08/14/living-nightmare/haiti-needs-urgent-rights-based-response-escalating-crisis)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

195 BINUH and UN OHCHR, ‘Criminal Violence Extends Beyond Port-Au-Prince: The Situation In Lower Artibonite From January 2022 To October 2023’ (November 2023) 21.

196 UN HRC, ‘Situation of human rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/76, para 28.

197 UN OCHA, ‘Haiti: Humanitarian note – New paradigm #2: The impact of violence on access to health care’ (April 23, 2023) 1-2.

198 *ibid* 2.

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)'s hospital in Cité Soleil was also forced to either partially or fully suspend operations on multiple occasions throughout the year due to attacks by gangs.<sup>199</sup>

Armed gangs have also targeted health care personnel. OCHA reported that 11 doctors were kidnapped in the first quarter of 2023,<sup>200</sup> as well as several cases of shootings and robberies of surgeons, doctors, and nurses of the Higgins Brothers Surgicenter for Hope in Fonds Parisien.<sup>201</sup>

### Recommendation to Further Investigate to Determine if Listing Is Warranted – Abduction

Abductions are utilized as a source of revenue for gangs, enabling them to acquire weapons and pay members.<sup>202</sup> In the first half of 2023, 37 children were abducted by armed gangs in Haiti – 13 girls and 24 boys.<sup>203</sup> OHCHR registered at least 59 children kidnapped by gangs throughout 2023.<sup>204</sup>

## Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

In the Secretary-General's 2023 report on CAAC, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory was the situation with the second-highest number of grave violations globally.<sup>205</sup> Despite persistently acknowledging high and enduring numbers of grave violations against

children, the Secretary-General has never listed Israeli Government Forces nor Palestinian armed groups. In 2023, the insecurity of children in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, in particular in the Gaza Strip, has worsened exponentially with a UNICEF spokesperson labelling Gaza as "the most dangerous place in the world to be a child."<sup>206</sup>

## Israeli Government Forces

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

Israeli Forces have been documented as perpetrators of grave violations against children in every annual report on CAAC since 2005. In the Secretary-General's 2023 report, the UN found the Israel Defense Forces responsible for 42 verified cases of killing and 1,087 of maiming Palestinian children in 2022 (including those requiring medical assistance after inhaling tear gas).<sup>207</sup> The Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories observed that in 2023, children in Gaza and the West Bank were killed indiscriminately by Israeli Forces.<sup>208</sup> One Israeli lieutenant confirmed the government's lack of consideration for children's protected status when he stated that "the number of Palestinian children 'incidentally killed' during operations aimed at 'eliminating terrorists' is 'irrelevant'."<sup>209</sup> Since the escalation of violence after October 7, the figures of children killed and maimed

199 UN OCHA, 'Haiti: Humanitarian note - New paradigm #1: The impact of violence' (March 31, 2023) 2; BINUH, 'Human Rights Situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April – June 2023' (August 31, 2023) 6; and UNGA, 'Situation of human rights in Haiti: Note by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (September 25, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/54/79, para 16.

200 UN OCHA, 'Haiti: Humanitarian note – New paradigm #2: The impact of violence on access to health care' (April 23, 2023) 1-2.

201 *ibid* 2.

202 UNSC, 'Assessment of progress achieved on the key benchmarks established in paragraph 25 of resolution 2653 (2022): Report of the Secretary-General' (September 15, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/677, para 18.

203 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General' (July 3, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/492, para 12.

204 UN HRC, 'Situation of human rights in Haiti: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/76, para 18.

205 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 85.

206 UNICEF, 'UNICEF Geneva Palais briefing note - Gaza: The world's most dangerous place to be a child' (December 19, 2023) <[www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/unicef-geneva-palais-briefing-note-gaza-worlds-most-dangerous-place-be-child](https://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/unicef-geneva-palais-briefing-note-gaza-worlds-most-dangerous-place-be-child)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

207 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc A/77/895-S/2023/363, para 88.

208 UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese' (October 20, 2023) UN Doc A/78/545, para 27.

209 *ibid* para 29; and Save the Children, 'Gaza: 10,000 children killed in nearly 100 days of war' (January 12, 2024) <[www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/gaza-10000-children-killed-in-nearly-100-days-of](https://www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/gaza-10000-children-killed-in-nearly-100-days-of)> (accessed April 5, 2024).



by Israeli Forces has reached unprecedented heights, with the Secretary-General himself stating that "Gaza is becoming a graveyard for children."<sup>210</sup>

### Gaza Strip

Following the attack of October 7, Israeli Forces launched a bombardment of indiscriminate airstrikes on the densely populated Gaza Strip in addition to a ground and naval offensive, deploying almost 40,000 combat troops<sup>211</sup> and striking over 22,000 targets.<sup>212</sup> Targets included residential buildings, refugee camps, places of worship, bakeries, supermarkets, and even displaced Palestinians moving through the "humanitarian corridor."<sup>213</sup> The destruction these attacks have inflicted upon children is unparalleled. Figures provided by Gaza's Ministry of Health (a source analyzed as credible by independent experts)<sup>214</sup> and cited by OCHA, indicate that as of December 11, 2023, 7,729 Palestinian children had been killed by Israeli Forces in Gaza.<sup>215</sup> In its report on January 9, the Ministry reported over 10,000 children killed in Gaza.<sup>216</sup> Thousands more are injured or missing, with UNICEF reporting over 9,000 children injured in Gaza between October 7 and December 21,<sup>217</sup> and more

than 1,000 children having lost either one or both their legs, illustrating the extent of life-changing mutilations inflicted by Israeli Government Forces.<sup>218</sup>

The International Court of Justice (ICJ)'s preliminary measures order in *South Africa v Israel* acknowledge Israel's sustained military operation as the cause of "tens of thousands of deaths and injuries and the destruction of homes, schools, medical facilities and other vital infrastructure."<sup>219</sup> The ICJ concluded that it is plausible that Israel has breached at least some of its obligations under the Genocide Convention as stipulated by Israel in its submission.<sup>220</sup>

Jabalia Refugee Camp in Northern Gaza has been particularly targeted and was hit by airstrikes every day in October.<sup>221</sup> On October 9, explosions from suspected GBU-31 munitions dropped in Jabalia Refugee Camp killed at least 11 children, as verified by OHCHR.<sup>222</sup> In one incident on October 31, 2023, Israeli Forces dropped a 2,000-pound bomb—a munition with a large blast and fragmentation range—on Jabalia refugee camp, killing at least 69 children; as reported by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories and recorded by the Explosive

210 UN, 'Press Conference by Secretary-General António Guterres at United Nations Headquarters' (November 6, 2023) UN Doc SM/SM/22021.

211 Explosive Weapons Monitor, 'Fragments: Explosive Weapons Monitor Quarterly' (December 2023) 1(2).

212 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 17; and Security Council Report, 'What's In Blue - The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question: Closed Consultations' (January 9, 2024) <[www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/01/the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question-closed-consultations-7.php](http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/01/the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question-closed-consultations-7.php)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

213 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 41; UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 46; and UN Women Palestine, '6-Month Response Framework' (November 2023) <[www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/Brief-UN-Women-Palestine-6-month-crisis-response-framework-en.pdf](http://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/Brief-UN-Women-Palestine-6-month-crisis-response-framework-en.pdf)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

214 Michael Spagat and Daniel Silverman, 'Who has been killed in Gaza? Two experts examine the data' (*Every Casualty Counts*, November 2, 2023) <<https://everycasualty.org/who-has-been-killed-in-gaza-two-experts-examine-the-data/>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

215 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel – reported impact | Day 85' (December 30, 2023).

216 Save the Children, 'Gaza: 10,000 children killed in nearly 100 days of war' (January 12, 2024) <[www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/gaza-10000-children-killed-in-nearly-100-days-of](http://www.savethechildren.org.au/media/media-releases/gaza-10000-children-killed-in-nearly-100-days-of)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

217 UNICEF, 'Facing life in the Gaza Strip with a new disability' (December 21, 2023) <[www.unicef.org/sop/stories/facing-life-gaza-strip-new-disability](http://www.unicef.org/sop/stories/facing-life-gaza-strip-new-disability)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

218 UN News, "Ten weeks of hell" for children in Gaza: UNICEF' (December 19, 2023) <<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/12/1144927>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

219 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa v. Israel)* (Pending) Order of 26 January 2024 <[www.icj-cij.org/case/192](http://www.icj-cij.org/case/192)> (accessed April 5, 2024) para 70.

220 *ibid* para 54.

221 UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) 'Jabalia Camp' <[www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip/jabalia-camp](http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip/jabalia-camp)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

222 UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 31.

Weapons Monitor.<sup>223</sup> OHCHR has thus far verified the death of 11 children in this incident.<sup>224</sup> The impact of such a bomb is akin to an earthquake.<sup>225</sup> The same type of munitions were reportedly dropped on Al-Yarmouk neighborhood on October 25, with OHCHR verifying at least 39 children killed as a result.<sup>226</sup> The High Commissioner evaluated that the use of these weapons in such densely populated areas “raises very serious concerns that these attacks were disproportionate and/or indiscriminate.”<sup>227</sup>

Even prior to the October 7 escalation, the killing and maiming of children warranted Israeli Forces a place in the Secretary-General’s annexes. OCHA has verified that Israeli Forces killed at least five children in Gaza during this period and injured a further 111.<sup>228</sup> The majority of these violations against children took place in May when the Israeli Air Force bombed residential buildings in a five-day offensive,<sup>229</sup> killing at least five children.<sup>230</sup>

## West Bank

Prior to October 7, 2023, it was already the deadliest year on record for Palestinian children in the West Bank,<sup>231</sup> with 40 verified cases of children killed by Israeli Forces according to OCHA.<sup>232</sup> The Secretary-General has observed that Israeli Forces routinely use live ammunition against Palestinian children in the West Bank, often shooting them in the upper part of their body or their head.<sup>233</sup> Following October 7, as with Gaza, the Israeli Government’s use of force against children in the West Bank increased, with OHCHR reporting a further 79 children killed between October 7 and December 27, 2023,<sup>234</sup> and UNICEF reporting the figure as 83.<sup>235</sup> Child deaths were attributed to the Israeli Government’s use of weapons of war, such as aerial attacks, drone strikes and missiles,<sup>236</sup> as well as ground operations to demolish Palestinian homes and in the context of protests,<sup>237</sup> including from tear gas inhalation.<sup>238</sup> OCHA has verified that 596 children in the West Bank were injured by Israeli Forces between October 7 and the end of the

- 223 UN HRC, ‘Anatomy of a Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese’ (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/73, para 71; Explosive Weapons Monitor, ‘Fragments: Explosive Weapons Monitor Quarterly’ (December 2023) 1(2); and Airwars, ‘Civilian Casualties’ (2023) <<https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/ispt0783-october-31-2023/>> (accessed April 5, 2024) Incident Code ISPT0783.
- 224 UNGA, ‘Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 35.
- 225 Airwars, ‘Civilian Casualties’ (2023) <<https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties/ispt0783-october-31-2023/>> (accessed April 5, 2024) Incident Code ISPT0783.
- 226 UNGA, ‘Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 33.
- 227 *ibid* para 37.
- 228 UN OCHA, ‘Data on Casualties’ <[www.ochoaopt.org/data/casualties](http://www.ochoaopt.org/data/casualties)> (accessed April 3, 2024).
- 229 UNGA, ‘Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem: Report of the Secretary-General’ (October 2, 2023) UN Doc A/78/502, paras 8 and 11; and Amnesty International, ‘Israel/OPT: Civilian deaths and extensive destruction in latest Gaza offensive highlight human toll of apartheid’ (June 13, 2023) <[www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/israel-opt-civilian-deaths-and-extensive-destruction-in-latest-gaza-offensive-highlight-human-toll-of-apartheid/](http://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2023/06/israel-opt-civilian-deaths-and-extensive-destruction-in-latest-gaza-offensive-highlight-human-toll-of-apartheid/)> (accessed April 5, 2024).
- 230 UNGA, ‘Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights’ (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 5.
- 231 UNGA, ‘Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories: Note by the Secretary-General’ (October 25, 2024) UN Doc A/78/553, para 19.
- 232 UN OCHA, ‘Data on Casualties’ <[www.ochoaopt.org/data/casualties](http://www.ochoaopt.org/data/casualties)> (accessed April 3, 2024).
- 233 UNGA, ‘Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem: Report of the Secretary-General’ (October 2, 2023) UN Doc A/78/502, para 20.
- 234 UN OHCHR, ‘The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023’ (December 27, 2023) 2.
- 235 UNICEF, ‘Number of children killed in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, reaches unprecedented levels’ (December 28, 2023) <[www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/number-children-killed-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reaches-unprecedented](http://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/number-children-killed-west-bank-including-east-jerusalem-reaches-unprecedented)> (accessed April 5, 2024).
- 236 Defense for Children International Palestine (DCI Palestine), ‘Year-in-review: Israeli forces carry out genocide against Palestinian children’ (December 14, 2023) <[www.dci-palestine.org/year\\_in\\_review\\_israeli\\_forces\\_carry\\_out\\_genocide\\_against\\_palestinian\\_children](http://www.dci-palestine.org/year_in_review_israeli_forces_carry_out_genocide_against_palestinian_children)> (accessed April 5, 2024).
- 237 UN OHCHR, ‘The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023’ (December 27, 2023) para 11.
- 238 UNSC, ‘Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General’ (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 23.

year.<sup>239</sup> A large number of injuries resulted from land and air attacks on densely populated refugee camps, such as Jenin Refugee Camp which was the subject of multiple Israeli operations in January, March, June, July,<sup>240</sup> and November.<sup>241</sup>

While figures of Palestinian children killed or injured by Israeli settlers in the West Bank are not included here, the distinction between Israeli Government Forces and armed settlers is blurred amidst rampant state-backed settler violence and following the government's distribution of 8,000 army rifles to civilian "settlements defense squads" and "regional defense battalions" in the West Bank.<sup>242</sup> The arming of settlers by the Israeli Government has caused an "exponential increase in attacks by armed settlers,"<sup>243</sup> and subsequently has led to the killing and maiming of Palestinian children. Israel has an obligation under international law to prevent grave violations against children committed by Israeli settlers.

### Recommendation to List – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

In 2023, Israeli Forces exacerbated their pattern of attacking both schools and hospitals and their respective personnel to an unprecedented scale.<sup>244</sup>

In *South Africa v Israel*, the ICJ acknowledged "the destruction of homes, schools, medical facilities and other vital infrastructure" by the Israeli Forces.<sup>245</sup>

According to the Government Media Office in Gaza (as reported by OCHA), over 69 percent of Gaza's education facilities sustained damage between October 7 and December 30, leaving 625,000 children without access to education.<sup>246</sup> UNICEF, as Education Cluster co-lead, reported the figure of schools in Gaza damaged by Israeli Forces as 370,<sup>247</sup> including both public schools and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) schools. Additionally, during Israel's five-day offensive in May 2023, a further 26 schools were damaged.<sup>248</sup> Israel's attacks on schools also extended to their staff, with Palestine's Ministry of Education reporting that between October 7, 2023, and January 2, 2024, 221 teachers were killed, and 708 educational personnel were injured.<sup>249</sup>

In 2023, Israeli Forces have continued attacking Palestinian health care facilities and their staff, including by besieging hospitals, forced evacuation of staff, bombing health care infrastructure, and preventing access to the necessary fuel and electricity to keep the facilities functioning.<sup>250</sup> Premature babies have reportedly been left behind to die as Israeli Forces forcibly evacuated staff from hospitals.<sup>251</sup> In addition, there are reports of

239 UN OCHA, 'Data on Casualties' <[www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties](http://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties)> (accessed April 3, 2024).

240 UNGA, 'Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese' (October 20, 2023) UN Doc A/78/545, para 37; UN OCHA, 'OPT: The Humanitarian Impact of the Israeli Forces operation In Jenin, 3-4 July' (July 13, 2023); and Diakonia International Humanitarian Law Centre, 'Excessive Force: A Legal Analysis of Israel's Operation in Jenin Refugee Camp' (July 13, 2023) <[www.diakonia.se/ihl/news/excessive-force-a-legal-analysis-of-israels-operation-in-jenin-refugee-camp/](http://www.diakonia.se/ihl/news/excessive-force-a-legal-analysis-of-israels-operation-in-jenin-refugee-camp/)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

241 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016): Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 26.

242 UN OHCHR, 'The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023' (December 27, 2023) paras 15, 16 and 36; and UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 33.

243 UN OHCHR, 'The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023' (December 27, 2023) para 2.

244 UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 43.

245 *Application of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide in the Gaza Strip (South Africa V. Israel)* (Pending) Order of 26 January 2024 <[www.icj-cij.org/case/192](http://www.icj-cij.org/case/192)> (accessed April 5, 2024) para 70.

246 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel - reported impact | Day 85' (December 30, 2023).

247 UNICEF, 'UNICEF in the State of Palestine: Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No. 12' (December 2023) 1.

248 UNGA, 'Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem: Report of the Secretary-General' (October 2, 2023) UN Doc A/78/502, para 12.

249 UNICEF, 'UNICEF in the State of Palestine: Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No. 13' (January 2024) 1.

250 DCI Palestine, 'Year-in-review: Israeli forces carry out genocide against Palestinian children' (December 14, 2023) <[www.dci-palestine.org/year\\_in\\_review\\_israeli\\_forces\\_carry\\_out\\_genocide\\_against\\_palestinian\\_children](http://www.dci-palestine.org/year_in_review_israeli_forces_carry_out_genocide_against_palestinian_children)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

251 Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 42327.

Israeli Forces firing white phosphorus at targets, including a children's hospital.<sup>252</sup> OHCHR reports 29 attacks on hospitals in Gaza between October 7 and October 31.<sup>253</sup> According to the Palestinian Ministry of Health and reported by the Health Cluster, 310 health care personnel were killed between October 7 and December 28.<sup>254</sup> By the end of 2023, 71 percent of hospitals in Gaza had been damaged,<sup>255</sup> and only 13 (out of 36) were partly operational.<sup>256</sup> Hospitals attacked include: Al-Shifa Hospital, Al-Rantissi Naser Paediatric Hospital, Al-Quds Hospital,<sup>257</sup> the Indonesian Hospital,<sup>258</sup> Al Yaman As Saeed Hospital,<sup>259</sup> Al-Awdah Hospital,<sup>260</sup> Ahli Arab Hospital,<sup>261</sup> the European Gaza Hospital,<sup>262</sup> Nasser Hospital, and Jordanian Field Hospital.<sup>263</sup> On numerous occasions, Israel attempted to justify its attacks on hospitals by claiming they were being used by armed groups for military purposes as "hospital shields,"<sup>264</sup> a strategy of "medical warfare" intended to legitimize attacks on the health care sector.<sup>265</sup> The allegations of military use of hospitals by

Hamas have been widely challenged by media reports,<sup>266</sup> and the High Commissioner noted that military use of these hospitals would still not justify indiscriminate or disproportionate attacks.<sup>267</sup>

Furthermore, according to data recorded by WHO, in 2023 there were a total of 541 attacks on health care settings in the Occupied Palestinian Territory which involved armed or non-armed assault or violence on health care personnel, patients or infrastructure, or the arrest or abduction of staff or civilians.<sup>268</sup> While perpetrator information is not recorded in WHO's database, due to the nature of the context in Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israeli Forces can be presumed accountable for the vast majority—if not all—of these attacks. Data collected by Insecurity Insight supports this assumption, with a total of 564 incidents of conflict violence that affected health care identified as being perpetrated by Israeli Forces.<sup>269</sup>

252 *ibid* Event ID 41095.

253 UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 43.

254 WHO and Health Cluster, 'Health Attacks & Resources - Attacks on Health - Update Date: 28 December 2023' <<https://healthcluster.who.int/countries-and-regions/occupied-palestinian-territory>> (accessed 8 January 2024).

255 UNICEF, 'UNICEF in the State of Palestine: Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No. 12' (December 2023) 1.

256 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #81' (December 30, 2023).

257 WHO, 'UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO Regional Directors call for immediate action to halt attacks on health care in Gaza' (November 12, 2023) <[www.emro.who.int/media/news/unfpa-unicef-and-who-regional-directors-call-for-immediate-action-to-halt-attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza.html](http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/unfpa-unicef-and-who-regional-directors-call-for-immediate-action-to-halt-attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza.html)> (accessed April 5, 2024); and WHO, 'Attacks on health care in Gaza Strip unacceptable, says WHO' (November 4, 2023) <[www.emro.who.int/media/news/attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza-strip-unacceptable-says-who.html](http://www.emro.who.int/media/news/attacks-on-health-care-in-gaza-strip-unacceptable-says-who.html)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

258 WHO, 'WHO appalled by latest attack on Indonesian Hospital in Gaza' (November 20, 2024) <<https://www.emro.who.int/media/news/who-appalled-by-latest-attack-on-indonesian-hospital-in-gaza.html?vaer=1>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

259 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #65' (December 10, 2023).

260 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016): Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 21.

261 *ibid*.

262 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #81' (December 30, 2023); and OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #65' (December 10, 2023).

263 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #65' (December 10, 2023).

264 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 21.

265 UN HRC, 'Anatomy of a Genocide: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, Francesca Albanese' (March 25, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/73, paras 87 and 88.

266 *ibid* para 90.

267 UNGA, 'Human rights situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure accountability and justice: Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/28, para 43.

268 WHO, 'Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care' <<https://extranet.who.int/ssa/Index.aspx>> (accessed January 9, 2024).

269 Insecurity Insight, 'Attacked and Threatened: Health Care at Risk' <<https://mapaction-maps.herokuapp.com/health>> (accessed April 5, 2024).

## The Qassam Brigades (the armed wing of Hamas) and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigade

Hamas and Al-Quds have both declared involvement in the attack of October 7, with Hamas known to have led the attacks. Recommendations for both armed groups are addressed here collectively as Watchlist was unable to disaggregate and independently verify incidents attributed to each group singularly.

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

On October 7, 2023, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigade attacked Israel by air and land, indiscriminately firing over 3,500 missiles and rockets towards civilian population centers, as well as breaching Israel's perimeter fence and entering Israeli towns, communities and military facilities where they killed, raped, and abducted both Israeli forces personnel and civilians, including children.<sup>270</sup> The Secretary-General estimated that 3,000 militants belonging to Hamas as well as the Palestinian Islamic Jihad, infiltrated Israeli communities by land, sea and air.<sup>271</sup> According to Israeli sources, at least 33 children were killed in the attack.<sup>272</sup>

A humanitarian pause in November saw a brief hiatus to the intensity of fighting, but airstrikes and ground operations by both sides resumed on December 1.<sup>273</sup> From October 7 to the end of 2023, OCHA has cited that Hamas-led fighters killed at least 36 children in total.<sup>274</sup>

### Recommendation to List – Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

According to data recorded by WHO, in 2023 there were a total of 63 attacks on health care in Israel involving armed or non-armed assault or violence on health care personnel, patients or infrastructure, or the arrest or abduction of staff or civilians. The WHO database does not identify perpetrators of these attacks; however, 37 took place on October 7.<sup>275</sup> For example, in one incident in Be'eri kibbutz, a 34-year-old Peruvian-Israeli doctor and a 22-year-old paramedic were killed by Hamas militants as they were trying to treat the wounded.<sup>276</sup>

### Recommendation to List – Abduction

On October 7, Hamas's armed wing and Islamic Jihad<sup>277</sup> abducted over 240 individuals from Israel, including at least 30 children.<sup>278</sup> The exact figure varies across sources with the Secretary-General reporting that 34 children were taken hostage,<sup>279</sup> and Israeli sources reporting that more than 35 were abducted.<sup>280</sup> An unconfirmed number were released during November's humanitarian pause; however, UNICEF Special representative Lucia Elmi stated on January 12, 2024, that two Israeli children remain held hostage in Gaza.<sup>281</sup>

270 UN OCHA, 'Flash Appeal: Occupied Palestinian Territory' (November 2023) 7.

271 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 11.

272 *ibid* para 12.

273 *ibid* para 20.

274 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #81' (December 30, 2023).

275 WHO, 'Surveillance System for Attacks on Health Care' <<https://extranet.who.int/ssa/Index.aspx>> (accessed January 9, 2024).

276 Stephen Grey, Maayan Lubell, and Ryan Mcneill, 'Hunted by Hamas: 27 hours of slaughter and survival inside Israel's Kibbutz Be'eri' (*Reuters*, November 3, 2023) <[www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-palestinians-kibbutz-attack/](http://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/israel-palestinians-kibbutz-attack/)> (accessed April 8, 2024); and Insecurity Insight, 'Security in Numbers Database' Event ID 41576.

277 Human Rights Watch, 'Hamas, Islamic Jihad: Holding Hostages is a War Crime' (October 19, 2023) <[www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/19/hamas-islamic-jihad-holding-hostages-war-crime](http://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/19/hamas-islamic-jihad-holding-hostages-war-crime)> (accessed April 5, 2024).

278 UN OCHA, 'Hostilities in the Gaza Strip and Israel | Flash Update #34' (November 9, 2023).

279 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General' (14 December 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, para 13.

280 UNICEF, 'UNICEF in the State of Palestine: Escalation Humanitarian Situation Report No. 13' (January 2024) 3.

281 UNICEF, 'Children in Gaza still at the sharp end of unrelenting war' (January 13, 2024) <[www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/children-gaza-still-sharp-end-unrelenting-war](http://www.unicef.org/sop/press-releases/children-gaza-still-sharp-end-unrelenting-war)> (accessed April 5, 2024).





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