

## Policy Note

April 2025

# “A Credible List”:

Recommendations for the  
Secretary-General’s 2025  
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 (UN) 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 children and armed conflict (‘annual report’). The annual report—which has been presented to the Security Council each year since 2000—is a tool of the United Nations’ Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) agenda created to address grave violations of children’s rights.

With this ninth 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.



## 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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## 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 with a unique set of tools for promoting the protection of children in armed conflict, including through the Secretary-General's annual report. 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 another important tool to ensure the protection of children in armed conflict. It provides a key first step towards accountability by clearly identifying warring parties responsible for grave violations against children in armed conflict. The mechanism also serves as a foundation for the UN to dialogue with warring parties; secure concrete commitments to end and prevent violations through the adoption of UN action plans; and create tangible, positive changes for children affected by war.

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. In 2023, the UN verified a staggering 32,990 grave violations against children – the highest number of grave violations verified in a single reporting period since the establishment of the MRM and a 21 percent increase from 2022.<sup>1</sup> Reports indicate that grave violations continued to take a relentless toll on children in 2024. 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. Parties have also been removed from the annexes without ending the violations for which they are listed.

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 described 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>

1 UN General Assembly (UNGA) and UN Security Council (UNSC), 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, <https://undocs.org/s/2024/384> (accessed March 12, 2025), 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, <https://undocs.org/s/2010/181> (accessed March 12, 2025), para 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 March 12, 2025).

## Methodology

Watchlist conducted a desk review of publicly available reports for 19 relevant country situations, plus the Lake Chad Basin region, for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2024, to inform the recommendations included in this policy note. These country situations were chosen based on the Secretary-General's 2024 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.

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. While having conducted research in English, Spanish, and French, Watchlist acknowledges

the inherent limitations of this desk review, given 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 2024 reporting period, Watchlist considered the number of UN-verified violations committed in 2023 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 (2023 and 2024) and recommended listing. In other cases, there was enough information to suggest that parties had committed a high number of violations in 2024 alone to recommend listing.

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

<sup>5</sup> 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 2024 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.

For some parties mentioned in the body of the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report that have not yet been listed, Watchlist recommends that the UN further investigate to determine whether they should be listed in the 2025 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 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 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.

## 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 2024 in the annexes of his upcoming annual report:
  - 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. **Central African Republic:** Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation, as part of the Coalition des patriotes pour le changement, for rape and other forms of sexual violence
  - c. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and related state security forces for killing and maiming
  - d. **Burkina Faso:** Defence and Security Forces for killing and maiming
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 killing and maiming
  - b. **Colombia:** Clan del Golfo (Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) for recruitment and use
  - c. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Alliance des forces de résistance congolaise for abduction
  - d. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo for recruitment and use
  - e. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke for recruitment and use
  - f. **Democratic Republic of the Congo:** Union des patriotes pour la défense du Congo for recruitment and use and abduction

<sup>6</sup> Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG-CAAC), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF), 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 March 12, 2025).

- g. **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory:** Israeli armed and security forces for rape and other forms of sexual violence
- h. **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory:** Israeli settlers for killing and maiming
- i. **Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory:** Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades and Hamas/Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions for rape and other forms of sexual violence
- j. **Mali:** Malian Armed Forces and affiliated forces for killing and maiming
- k. **Myanmar:** Peoples' defense forces and local defense groups for recruitment and use and attacks on schools and hospitals
- l. **Syria:** Turkish Government Forces for killing and maiming
- m. **Yemen:** Yemen Government Forces (investigate if re-listing is warranted) for recruitment and use
- n. **Lake Chad Basin:** Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals
- o. **Ukraine:** Russian armed forces and affiliated forces for abduction
- p. **Cameroon:** Armed separatist groups for attacks on schools and hospitals
- q. **Ethiopia:** Ethiopian National Defense Forces and security forces for killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals
- r. **Haiti:** Various armed gangs including those aligned with the Viv Ansanm Alliance, including the G9 Family and Allies led by Jimmy Chérizier ("G9 Alliance"), and G-Pèp Alliance, the Gran Grif gang, as well as the vigilante movement known as Bwa Kalé for all "trigger" violations
- s. **Lebanon:** Israeli armed and security forces for killing and maiming
- t. **Niger:** Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad for abduction

# 1. 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 annexes of the Secretary-General's 2024 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 2024 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) 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 2025 report on CAAC.*

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

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

The 2024 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC identified the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and pro-government forces as responsible for perpetrating rape and other forms of sexual violence against 16 girls in 2023.<sup>7</sup> The National Armed Forces of the Central African Republic are also listed in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report on conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) as a party credibly suspected of perpetrating rape and other forms of sexual violence.<sup>8</sup> According to the same report, national security forces were presumed to be implicated in 177 cases of rape and sexual violence documented in 2023, with other security forces also implicated in some cases.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, (accessed March 12, 2025), para 32.

<sup>8</sup> UNSC, 'Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General,' (April 4, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/292, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/292> (accessed March 8, 2025), annex.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., para 23.



This trend continued in 2024. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) reported in its quarterly reports that state forces were responsible for nine percent of 81 cases of CRSV documented from January to March 2024, 18 percent of 77 cases of CRSV documented from April to June 2024, and 36 percent of 64 cases of CRSV documented from July to September 2024.<sup>10</sup> Though these quarterly reports do not specify the number of child victims impacted by these cases and include some cases that occurred in earlier years but were documented or verified during the reporting period, MINUSCA's monthly reports from 2024 confirm that many of these victims were children. These monthly MINUSCA reports document cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence by state forces against 58 girls over the course of the year.<sup>11</sup> For example, on October 18 in Ouaka Prefecture, a FACA element "intercepted a 14-year-old girl when she was walking on the road and forcibly took her to the FACA base where he raped her."<sup>12</sup>

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

The 2024 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC verified seven instances of killing and maiming by government and pro-government forces in Central African Republic in 2023.<sup>13</sup> Evidence suggests that this trend continued in 2024. MINUSCA's quarterly report from January to March 2024 documented state-perpetrated violations of the right to life that impacted 35 victims.<sup>14</sup> These violations included death threats and killing of three boys.<sup>15</sup> MINUSCA also documented an incident that occurred in February 2024 in which FACA erected a barricade on the road in front of a school and beat boys passing by with sticks, causing injuries to 23 boys.<sup>16</sup> In addition, the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED) documented two instances of killing and maiming of children by government forces in 2024.<sup>17</sup> In one of these incidents, for example, a FACA soldier threw a grenade into a crowd, killing two civilians and wounding 20 others, all of whom were children.<sup>18</sup>

10 MINUSCA, 'Human Rights Quarterly Brief on the Central African Republic: January-March 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_quarterly\\_report\\_jan-mar\\_2024\\_en.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_quarterly_report_jan-mar_2024_en.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), p. 7; MINUSCA, 'Human Rights Quarterly Brief on the Central African Republic: April-June 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_quarterly\\_report\\_q2\\_april-june\\_2024\\_en.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_quarterly_report_q2_april-june_2024_en.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), 7; and MINUSCA, 'Human Rights Quarterly Brief on the Central African Republic: July-September 2024,' [https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2120698/hrd\\_quarterly\\_report\\_-\\_july\\_-\\_sept\\_2024.pdf](https://www.ecoi.net/en/file/local/2120698/hrd_quarterly_report_-_july_-_sept_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), p. 5.

11 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: January 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_january\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_january_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 25; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: February 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_february\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_february_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 18; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: March 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_monthly\\_report\\_march\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_monthly_report_march_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 22; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: April 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_april\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_april_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 22; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: May 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_may\\_2024\\_en.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_may_2024_en.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 17; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: June 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_june\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_june_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 21; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: July 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_july\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_july_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 13; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: August,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_august\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_august_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 15; 'Monthly Report: September 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_september\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_september_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 14; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: October 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_october\\_2024\\_0.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_october_2024_0.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 17; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: November 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_november\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_november_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 17; and MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: December 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_monthly\\_report\\_-\\_december\\_2024.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_monthly_report_-_december_2024.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), para 23.

12 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: October 2024,' para 18.

13 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 31.

14 MINUSCA, 'Human Rights Quarterly Brief on the Central African Republic: January-March 2024,' [https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd\\_-\\_quarterly\\_report\\_jan-mar\\_2024\\_en.pdf](https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/hrd_-_quarterly_report_jan-mar_2024_en.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), p. 7.

15 Ibid., p. 10.

16 MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: March 2024,' para 34.

17 ACLED dataset, <https://acleddata.com/> (accessed March 3, 2025), Event ID CEN50028 and CEN50106.

18 Ibid., Event ID CEN50106.

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

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

The 2024 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC attributed 10 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against girls to 3R in 2023.<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, 3R, as part of the CPC, is listed in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report on conflict-related sexual violence as a party credibly suspected of perpetrating rape and other forms of sexual violence in Central African Republic (CAR).<sup>20</sup> The same report noted that 3R and UPC were the main perpetrators of the 290 cases of conflict-related sexual violence documented by MINUSCA in 2023.<sup>21</sup> The report indicates that these 290 cases impacted approximately 160 girls, without specifying the age disaggregation by perpetrator.<sup>22</sup> According to MINUSCA's monthly human rights reports, 3R was responsible for perpetrating sexual violence against 98 victims over the course of 2024, at least 12 of whom were children.<sup>23</sup>

## 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 2024 CAAC report. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's upcoming annual report on CAAC.*

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

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

The UN has verified cases of recruitment and use of children by Clan del Golfo (also known as AGC) over the past several years, though generally in lower numbers than the listed FARC-EP dissident groups or ELN. In the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report on CAAC, the UN found AGC responsible for 22 verified incidents of recruitment and use in 2023, an increase from 15 in 2022.<sup>24</sup> In 2024, the Secretary-General issued his sixth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Colombia, covering a reporting period from July 2021 to June 2023. During this period, the UN attributed 29 cases of child recruitment and use to AGC.<sup>25</sup> In the same report, the Secretary-General expressed his concern at the rise in recruitment and use by armed groups, "in particular by dissident FARC-EP groups, ELN and AGC."<sup>26</sup> Recruitment and use of children in Colombia continued to be a concern in 2024, though little data is available on specific perpetrators.<sup>27</sup> The UN Office of the High Commissioner

<sup>19</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 32.

<sup>20</sup> UNSC, 'Conflict-related sexual violence: Report of the Secretary-General,' (April 4, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/292, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/292> (accessed March 8, 2025), annex.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., para 23.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: January 2024,' para 23; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: February 2024,' para 18; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: May 2024,' para 16; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: June 2024,' para 21; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: July 2024,' para 13; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: August 2024,' para 15; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: September 2024,' para 14; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: October 2024,' para 17; MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: November 2024,' para 16; and MINUSCA, 'Monthly Report: December 2024,' para 22.

<sup>24</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 43; UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 5, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/363, <https://undocs.org/s/2023/363> (accessed March 4, 2025), para 41.

<sup>25</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in Colombia: Report of the Secretary-General,' (February 13, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/161, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/161> (accessed March 4, 2025), para 24.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., para 60.

<sup>27</sup> Tiziano Breda, 'Civilians in Colombia face less deadly – but more pervasive – violence during Petro's presidency,' (February 17, 2025), ACLED, <https://acleddata.com/2025/02/17/civilians-in-colombia-face-less-deadly-but-more-pervasive-violence-during-petros-presidency/> (accessed March 4, 2025); International Crisis Group, 'Colombia: From 'Total Peace' to Local Peace,' Watch List 2025, January 30, 2025, <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/watch-list-2025> (accessed March 4, 2025).



for Human Rights (OHCHR) reported 216 verified cases of recruitment and use of children by non-state armed groups in 2024, but does not specify the armed groups responsible.<sup>28</sup> According to the Office of the Ombudsman of Colombia, AGC and Bloque Virgilio Peralta Arenas (Caparros) collectively were responsible for two percent of the 159 documented child recruitment cases in the first half of 2024.<sup>29</sup> According to a database maintained by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), AGC was implicated in the recruitment of a teenager at Valle del Cauca, on the 21 and 22 of August 2024, following clashes between AGC and the ELN.<sup>30</sup> Additional reporting by ACAPS and COALICO also continue to point to recruitment and use of children by AGC in 2024.<sup>31</sup>

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, 16 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 2025 report on CAAC.*

## Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) and related state security forces

### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

In its 2024 “Credible List” report, Watchlist recommended that the Secretary-General list the FARDC for killing and maiming.<sup>32</sup> In his 2024 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General attributed 26 incidents of killing and maiming of children to the FARDC.<sup>33</sup> The trend of FARDC-perpetrated killing and maiming continued in 2024. According to the UN Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024, Congolese security forces were responsible for at least 51 child casualties. However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.<sup>34</sup> Reports of the UN Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) covering December 1, 2023, through November 29, 2024, have documented summary and extrajudicial killings by state actors in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) that resulted in the deaths of at least 54 children.<sup>35</sup> These reports also document 12 instances of killing and maiming of children by Congolese security forces, though

28 UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), ‘Situation of human rights in Colombia,’ (January 22, 2025), UN Doc A/HRC/58/24, <https://docs.un.org/A/HRC/58/24> (accessed March 4), para 18.

29 Office of the Ombudsman of Colombia, ‘51% de casos de reclutamiento conocidos por la Defensoría corresponde a niñas, niños y adolescentes de pueblos indígenas,’ (July 12, 2024), <https://www.defensoria.gov.co/-/51-de-casos-de-reclutamiento-conocidos-por-la-defensor%C3%ADa-corresponde-a-ni%C3%B1as-y-adolescentes-de-pueblos-ind%C3%ADgenas#:~:text=En%20el%20primer%20semestre%20del,no%20se%20cuenta%20con%20informaci%C3%B3n> (accessed March 4, 2025); Human Rights Watch, ‘World Report 2025: Colombia,’ <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/colombia> (accessed March 4, 2025).

30 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), ‘Situación Humanitaria Colombia,’ <https://monitor.unocha.org/colombia> (accessed January 18, 2025), Event ID 5408.

31 ACAPS, ‘Colombia: Recruitment and Use,’ (April 15, 2024), [https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data\\_Product/Main\\_media/20240415\\_ACAPS\\_Colombia\\_Analysis\\_Hub\\_Child\\_recruitment\\_and\\_use\\_in\\_Colombia.pdf](https://www.acaps.org/fileadmin/Data_Product/Main_media/20240415_ACAPS_Colombia_Analysis_Hub_Child_recruitment_and_use_in_Colombia.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025); Observatorio de Niñez y Conflicto Armado de COALICO, ‘Boletín de Monitoreo 32: Niñez y Conflicto Armado en Colombia,’ (February 26, 2025), <https://coalico.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Bolet%C3%ADn-de-Monitoreo-32-Ni%C3%97ez-y-Conflicto-Armado-en-Colombia.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2025).

32 Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, ‘“A Credible List”: Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2024 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict,’ (April 2024) <https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/2024-credible-list-report-final.pdf> (accessed March 12, 2025), p. 7.

33 UNGA and UNSC, ‘Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,’ (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 59.

34 UNSC, ‘Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Report of the Secretary-General,’ (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, <https://docs.un.org/S/2024/705>, paras 39–40.

35 UNSC, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,’ (March 21, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/251, <https://docs.un.org/S/2024/251>, para 28; UNSC, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,’ (June 20, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/482, <https://docs.un.org/S/2024/482>, para 22; UNSC, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,’ (September 20, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/689, <https://docs.un.org/S/2024/689>, para 21; and UNSC, ‘United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,’ (November 29, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/863, <https://docs.un.org/S/2024/863>, para 23.

the specific security force actor was not specified.<sup>36</sup> Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have also documented instances of the FARDC using explosive weapons in populated areas and firing weapons at residents of displacement camps, leading to deaths and injuries of civilians, with multiple child casualties.<sup>37</sup> For example, Amnesty's report identifies FARDC as most likely responsible for an artillery round that killed or injured 15 children in Mweso on January 25, 2024. Additionally, ACLED documented one incident on February 21, 2024, during which an FARDC soldier shot a local youth in Uvira.<sup>38</sup>

## Alliance des forces de résistance congolaise (AFRC)

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN verified the AFRC as responsible for 39 incidents of child abduction in 2023.<sup>39</sup> This data is consistent with a longer-term trend. According to the UN CTFMR, AFRC were responsible for at least 52 instances of child abduction between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024.<sup>40</sup> However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.

## Front Patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (FPIC)

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN attributed 61 verified cases of recruitment and use of children to FPIC in 2023.<sup>41</sup> This data is consistent with a longer-term trend. According to the UN CTFMR, FPIC was responsible for at least 109 cases of recruitment and use between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024.<sup>42</sup> However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.

## Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN attributed 38 verified cases of recruitment and use of children to the Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke in 2023.<sup>43</sup> This data is consistent with a longer-term trend. According to the UN CTFMR, Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke was responsible for at least 189 cases of recruitment and use between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024.<sup>44</sup> However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.

36 UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,' (March 21, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/251, para 32; UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 20, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/482, para 27; and UNSC, 'United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Report of the Secretary-General,' (September 20, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/689, para 28.

37 Human Rights Watch, 'DR Congo: Rwandan Forces, M23 Rebels Shell Civilians,' (September 26, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/09/26/dr-congo-rwandan-forces-m23-rebels-shell-civilians> (accessed March 6, 2025); and Amnesty International, 'DR Congo: Rwandan-backed armed group and Congolese army must stop using explosive weapons in densely populated areas,' (January 19, 2025), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2025/01/dr-congo-rwandan-backed-armed-group-and-congolese-army-must-stop-using-explosive-weapons-in-densely-populated-areas/> (accessed March 6, 2025).

38 ACLED dataset, Event ID DRC31923.

39 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 62.

40 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, para 66.

41 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 57.

42 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, para 29.

43 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 57.

44 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, para 29.

## Union des patriotes pour la défense du Congo (UPDC)

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN attributed 56 verified cases of recruitment and use of children to the UPDC in 2023.<sup>45</sup> This data is consistent with a longer-term trend. According to the UN CTFMR, UPDC was responsible for at least 90 cases of recruitment and use between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024.<sup>46</sup> However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.

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

In 2023, the UN verified UPDC as the perpetrator of 50 incidents of child abduction.<sup>47</sup> This data is consistent with a longer-term trend. According to the UN CTFMR, UPDC was responsible for at least 59 cases of child abduction between April 1, 2022, and March 31, 2024.<sup>48</sup> However, the exact dates of the incidents were not specified.

## 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 2024 CAAC report.*

## Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, over 8,000 grave violations against children were verified in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory—the highest number of grave violations ever recorded in a single conflict situation in an annual CAAC report.<sup>49</sup> Following the unprecedented levels of violence against children in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory since October 7, 2023, the Secretary-General listed the following parties for the first time ever in the annexes of his 2024 annual report: Israeli armed and security forces for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and/or hospitals; Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades and Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions for killing and maiming and abduction. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 CAAC report.*

## Israeli armed and security forces

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report, in 2023, the UN received testimonies of 84 children who reported ill-treatment by Israeli armed and security forces while in detention, including reports of multiple forms of sexual violence.<sup>50</sup> Reports of abuse of detainees, including children, by Israeli armed and security forces

45 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 57.

46 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, para 29.

47 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 62.

48 UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/705, para 66.

49 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 95.

50 Ibid., para 108.

continued in 2024. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel reported that hundreds of children from Gaza and the West Bank had been arrested, then transferred and detained in Israel and the West Bank between October 7, 2023, and August 2024.<sup>51</sup> These children were subjected to “extreme violence during arrest, detention, interrogation and release.”<sup>52</sup> The Commission documented 20 cases of sexual and gender-based violence against detainees in more than 10 military and Israeli Prison Service facilities.<sup>53</sup> While the Commission does not specify whether children were among these cases, the report documents instances where children were held with adults and subjected to similar mistreatment as adults, specifically in Sde Teiman.<sup>54</sup>

The Commission also documented men and boys photographed and filmed in “degrading and humiliating circumstances while being subjected to acts of a sexual nature, including forced public nudity and stripping, full or partial.”<sup>55</sup> The Commission also received reports about sexual violence and threats of sexual violence against girls by Israeli security forces. In one incident, for example, a 14-year-old girl was reportedly searched and subjected to sexual violence when passing by the Bab Al Zahera Police station on her way to a school.<sup>56</sup> Accounts by released detainees received by the UN Relief and

Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) since November 2023 have further corroborated reports of sexual violence while in custody, though the report does not specify whether children were among those subjected to this abuse.<sup>57</sup> Multiple UN Rapporteurs and Independent Experts have repeatedly raised serious concerns over allegations of torture and sexual violence of detainees, including children.<sup>58</sup>

## Israeli settlers

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

In the Secretary-General’s 2024 annual report on CAAC, the UN found Israeli settlers responsible for 51 grave violations against Palestinian children, including one child killed and 36 injured and 14 attacks on schools and/or hospitals.<sup>59</sup> According to OCHA, since the beginning of 2024 there have been 1,420 incidents of Israeli settler violence.<sup>60</sup> These incidents include settlers reportedly killing one child and injuring another 35 children.<sup>61</sup> The UN has reported escalating violence in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, resulting in the deaths of 167 children between October 7, 2023, and October 21, 2024. Of these, 12 children were killed by Israeli settlers, and for seven child casualties, it is

51 UNGA, ‘Report of Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel,’ (September 11, 2024) UN Doc A/79/232, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/n24/262/79/pdf/n2426279.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2025), para 59.

52 Ibid., para 62.

53 Ibid., para 62-69.

54 Ibid., para 60.

55 UN Human Rights Council, ‘More than a human can bear’: Israel’s systematic use of sexual, reproductive and other forms of gender-based violence since October 7, 2023,’ (March 13, 2025) UN Doc A/HRC/58/CRP.6, Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session58/a-hrc-58-crp-6.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2025), para 93.

56 Ibid., para 112.

57 UNRWA, ‘Detention and alleged ill-treatment of detainees from Gaza during Hamas-Israel War,’ (April 16, 2024), [https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary\\_on\\_detention\\_and\\_alleged\\_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf](https://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/content/resources/summary_on_detention_and_alleged_ill-treatmentupdated.pdf) (accessed March 13, 2025), p. 2.

58 OHCHR, ‘Israel’s escalating use of torture against Palestinians in custody a preventable crime against humanity: UN experts,’ (August 5, 2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/08/israels-escalating-use-torture-against-palestinians-custody-preventable> (accessed March 13, 2025); OHCHR, ‘Israel/oPt: UN experts appalled by reported human rights violations against Palestinian women and girls,’ (February 19, 2024), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/02/israelopt-un-experts-appalled-reported-human-rights-violations-against> (accessed March 13, 2025).

59 UNGA and UNSC, ‘Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,’ (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/843, paras 110-111.

60 OCHA, ‘Humanitarian Situation Update #252 | West Bank,’ <https://www.ochaopt.org/content/humanitarian-situation-update-252-west-bank> (accessed March 26, 2025).

61 Ibid.

unknown whether the perpetrators were Israeli forces or settlers.<sup>62</sup> ACLED reported at least six incidents of killing and maiming of children attributed to settlers, with many of these incidents characterized by children being run over by vehicles, resulting in their death or injury.<sup>63</sup> For example, on May 15, 2024, an Israeli settler reportedly ran over two Palestinian children, both of whom were injured and hospitalized.<sup>64</sup> In another incident on August 11, 2024, an Israeli settler reportedly ran over a Palestinian child on a bypass road in the old city. The child was injured and hospitalized.<sup>65</sup> Other incidents involved the participation of IDF or other Israeli authorities. For instance, ACLED reported that on February 27, 2024, Israeli settlers, under the protection of Israeli forces, opened fire at a Palestinian child in the Al Arqub area (Hebron, West Bank).<sup>66</sup>

The distinction between Israeli Government Forces and armed settlers is blurred amidst reports of 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>67</sup> According to OHCHR, the arming of settlers by the Israeli Government has caused an "exponential increase in attacks by armed settlers" and subsequently has led to the killing and maiming of Palestinian children.<sup>68</sup> In light of the difficulties in assessing the level of independence of Israeli settlers from Israeli armed

and security forces, Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate to determine if Israeli settlers should be listed in the annexes.

## **Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades and Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades and affiliated factions**

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

The Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report notes that the UN received credible reports of sexual violence against Israeli civilians, including children, in the context of the October 7, 2023, attacks.<sup>69</sup> Following an investigating mission between January 29 and February 14, 2024, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) reported clear and convincing information that sexual violence had occurred against some women and children who had been taken hostage.<sup>70</sup> The Commission reiterated similar credible information about some hostages being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence while in captivity, including sexualized torture and abuse, but does not specify whether children were among those subjected to such abuse.<sup>71</sup> While incidents related to rape and other forms of sexual violence during the October 7, 2023,

62 UNICEF, 'Humanitarian Action for Children 2025, State of Palestine,' <https://www.unicef.org/media/166061/file/2025-HAC-State-of-Palestine.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2025), endnote 17.

63 ACLED dataset, Event ID PSE58019; PSE57456; PSE55324; PSE52379; PSE51930; PSE49763; PSE47963; PSE48756.

64 ACLED dataset, Event ID PSE52379.

65 ACLED dataset, Event ID PSE58019.

66 ACLED dataset, Event ID PSE47963.

67 UNHRC, 'Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023,' (December 27, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/55/72, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/55/72>, paras 15, 16 and 36; UNHRC 'Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights: The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the obligation to ensure and justice,' (February 13, 2025), UN Doc A/HRC/58/28, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/58/28>, para 5, 63; UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016) Report of the Secretary-General,' (December 14, 2023) UN Doc S/2023/988, <https://www.undocs.org/S/2023/988>, para 33.

68 UNHRC, 'Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights: The human rights situation in the occupied West Bank including East Jerusalem 7 October - 20 November 2023,' (December 27, 2023) UN Doc A/HRC/55/72, para 2.

69 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/843, para 103.

70 Office of the SRSG-SVC, 'Mission report Official visit of the Office of the SRSG-SVC to Israel and the occupied West Bank 29 January – 14 February 2024,' [https://news.un.org/en/sites/news.un.org/en/files/atoms/files/Mission\\_report\\_of\\_SRSG\\_SVC\\_to\\_Israel-oWB\\_29Jan\\_14\\_feb\\_2024.pdf](https://news.un.org/en/sites/news.un.org/en/files/atoms/files/Mission_report_of_SRSG_SVC_to_Israel-oWB_29Jan_14_feb_2024.pdf) (accessed March 13, 2025), para 71.

71 UNGA, 'Report of Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel,' (September 11, 2024) UN Doc A/79/232, para 83.



attacks fall outside of the reporting period, Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate to determine if sexual violence was perpetrated against child hostages who continued to be held captive in 2024 and determine whether listing is warranted for this grave violation in the 2025 annual 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 each listed for recruitment and use and rape and other forms of sexual violence in the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC. In addition, Platform, including affiliated groups, is listed for recruitment and use. JNIM was also newly listed for killing and maiming in the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 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 28 cases of killing and maiming by the Malian Armed Forces in the Secretary General's 2024 annual report on CAAC.<sup>72</sup> The Secretary-General's fifth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Mali attributes 59 cases of killing and maiming of children

to Malian Armed Forces and an additional four cases to foreign security personnel between April 1, 2022, and March 1, 2024.<sup>73</sup>

This trend appears to have continued in 2024, although reporting has become more difficult following the withdrawal of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA) in December 2023.<sup>74</sup> According to reporting by Human Rights Watch, in 2024, counterinsurgency operations carried out by the Malian Armed Forces and affiliated groups, notably the Wagner Group, resulted in civilian casualties, including children. For example, on January 26, a search operation targeting Islamist fighters carried out by Malian soldiers in Ouro Fero Village resulted in 25 fatalities, including four children.<sup>75</sup> Additionally, on February 16 and 17, 2024, military drone strikes during a wedding and burial, respectively, resulted in the deaths of at least 14 civilians, including four children.<sup>76</sup> On May 3, a joint operation by Malian soldiers and Wagner fighters in Barikoro, a village within a JNIM-controlled area in the Segou region, led to the deaths of two men and one boy.<sup>77</sup> In Kidal, a frequent site of such incidents, drone strikes on August 25 reportedly aimed at members of an unknown armed group resulted in the deaths of at least five children.<sup>78</sup> Other incidents recorded by ACLED from March 1 to November 19 indicate that an estimated 32 children were killed or injured by attacks involving Malian Armed Forces, with one incident also involving the Wagner Group.<sup>79</sup> Other reports during this period indicate that Malian Armed Forces and affiliated forces were responsible for 20 additional civilian deaths that included an unspecified number of children.<sup>80</sup>

72 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 139.

73 UNSC, 'Children and Armed Conflict in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General,' (January 9, 2025) UN Doc S/2024/883, <https://undocs.org/s/2024/883> (accessed March 12, 2025), para 25.

74 UNSC, 'Children and Armed Conflict in Mali: Report of the Secretary-General,' para 7; Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Atrocities by the Army and Wagner Group,' (December 12, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/12/12/mali-atrocities-army-and-wagner-group> (accessed March 12, 2025).

75 Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Army, Wagner Group Atrocities Against Civilians,' (March 28, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/03/28/mali-army-wagner-group-atrocities-against-civilians> (accessed February 26, 2025).

76 Ibid.

77 Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2025: Events of 2024,' [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2025/01/World%20Report%202025.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2025/01/World%20Report%202025.pdf) (accessed March 12, 2025), p. 304.

78 Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2025: Events of 2024,' p. 305; Human Rights Watch, 'Mali: Atrocities by the Army and Wagner Group,' (December 12, 2024); ACLED dataset, Event ID MLI32976.

79 ACLED dataset, Event ID MLI33223, MLI33085, MLI32574, MLI33487, MLI32292, MLI32160, MLI32064, MLI31860.

80 ACLED dataset, Event ID MLI32157 and MLI33441.



## Myanmar

*The Myanmar armed forces, including related forces and affiliated militias are listed in the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report for all five "trigger" grave violations. In addition, the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, 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 2025 report on CAAC.*

### People's Defense Forces (PDFs) / local defense groups

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

In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, the UN attributed 38 cases of recruitment and use of children to PDFs/local defense groups, an increase from the previous year (18).<sup>81</sup> According to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar, the UN has continued to receive reports of child recruitment by PDFs and ethnic armed groups in 2024.<sup>82</sup> The Special Rapporteur further noted in his October 2024 report to the UN General Assembly that the UN had received reports of PDF and ethnic armed groups carrying out forced recruitment, including of children.<sup>83</sup>

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

In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, the UN attributed 27 attacks on schools and hospitals to the PDFs/local defense groups.<sup>84</sup> UN reports published by 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>85</sup> The Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (GCPEA) documented similar trends throughout 2022 and 2023, including 40 incidents where schools were attacked while being used for military purposes, though the report does not specify the perpetrators of these attacks.<sup>86</sup> This trend may have continued in 2024, though specific reporting was scarce. According to a database managed by Insecurity Insight, PDF and local defense forces were implicated in 22 attacks resulting in damage to or destruction of schools, the majority of which were in the context of attacks on military troops occupying the school or its grounds in 2024.<sup>87</sup> A database maintained by ACLED documented eight incidents of attacks by PDF/local defense groups resulting in damage to hospitals or other health facilities.<sup>88</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigates 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.

81 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, paras 138, 149.

82 UNHRC, 'Situation of human rights in Myanmar: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews,' (March 20, 2024) UN Doc A/HRC/55/65, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/55/65> (accessed March 4, 2025), para 47.

83 UNGA, 'Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar, Thomas H. Andrews,' (October 25, 2024) UN Doc A/79/550, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/a79550-report-special-rapporteur-situation-human-rights-myanmar-thomas-h>, para 110.

84 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 153.

85 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; 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.

86 GCPEA, 'Education under Attack 2024,' (June 2024) [https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua\\_2024.pdf](https://protectingeducation.org/wp-content/uploads/eua_2024.pdf) (accessed March 12, 2025), p. 153.

87 Insecurity Insight shared dataset, Event ID 44106, 44140, 45844, 45848, 45861, 45859, 45863, 57884, 59420, 59428, 71085, 71157, 71216, 71156, 71225, 71227, 71710, 88207, 87792, 87474, 87466, 87450.

88 ACLED dataset, Event ID MMR80987, MMR82356, MMR79799, MMR81948, MMR57710, MMR61188, MMR84244, MMR82613.

## Somalia

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 CAAC report, Al-Shabaab is listed for all five "trigger" violations. The Somali National Army (formerly listed as 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.*

## 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 2024 report on CAAC. The Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition - pro-Machar (SPLM/A-IO) is listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abductions.*

## Sudan

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi, the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction, Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction, and the Third Front-Tamazuj are listed for recruitment and use. In 2024, the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) were newly listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and/or hospitals. The Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) were also newly listed for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and/or hospitals.*

## 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 2024 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 (HTS) 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.*

*On November 27, 2024, a coalition of rebel forces, including HTS along with the Syrian National Army, which are listed for grave violations in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report on CAAC, launched a major offensive which led to the ousting of President Bashar al-Assad.<sup>89</sup> By December 8, Assad had fled the country, prompting the establishment of a transitional government by the rebel coalition.<sup>90</sup>*

*Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 report on CAAC.*

## Turkish Government Forces

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

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report on CAAC, Turkish Government Forces were found responsible for one verified child casualty in Syria in 2023.<sup>91</sup> In 2024, conflict monitor Airwars reported a Turkish artillery strike on January 17 in Al-Shahbah District, Northern Aleppo, that resulted in the death of one child.<sup>92</sup> Airwars documented four additional incidents in Aleppo, one in*

<sup>89</sup> Security Council Report, 'Syria: Closed Consultations,' (December 9, 2024), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/12/syria-closed-consultations.php> (accessed March 25, 2025).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 204.

<sup>92</sup> Airwars Civilian Casualties Dataset, <https://airwars.org/civilian-casualties> (accessed February 17, 2025), Incident ID TS681.

Al Hasakah on May 31, and another in Raqqa on August 27, collectively resulting in the deaths of 15 children.<sup>93</sup> Additionally, ACLED reported two cases in January 2024 in Idlib where the Turkish Gendarmerie detained and tortured two boys, leading to their deaths due to severe wounds.<sup>94</sup>

## Yemen

*The Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) are listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and attacks on schools and/or hospitals in the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC. Security Belt Forces, Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula, and pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees are each listed for recruitment and use. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 annual report.*

## Yemen Armed Forces

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

In the Secretary-General's 2022 report on CAAC, Government forces, including the Yemen Armed Forces, were conditionally removed from the annexes for the grave violation of recruitment and use. However, evidence indicates that recruitment and use of children by the Yemen Armed Forces has continued. The Secretary-General's reports on CAAC document 28 grave violations of recruitment and use of children by the Yemen Armed Forces in the 2022 report, four in the 2023 report, and 33 in the 2024 report.<sup>95</sup> Mwatana documented eight incidents of recruitment and use of children throughout 2024 attributed to the internationally recognized Government of Yemen.<sup>96</sup> Due to reports of ongoing recruitment and use of children, Watchlist recommends the Secretary-General further investigate to determine whether Yemen Armed Forces should be re-listed for this grave violation.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., Incident ID TS691, TS695, TS697, TS706, TS698.

<sup>94</sup> ACLED dataset, Event ID SYR123757; SYR123383.

<sup>95</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, paras 206-207 and para 218.

<sup>96</sup> Mwatana, 'Legacy of Gunpowder: Map of Human Rights Violations in Yemen,' <https://maps.mwatana.org/en> (accessed March 6, 2025).

## 2. Annex II Countries

### Burkina Faso

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) is listed for killing and maiming and abduction of children and 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. Watchlist recommends the following regarding the Secretary-General's 2025 CAAC report.*

### Defence and Security Forces

#### Recommendation to List – Killing and Maiming

The UN verified 251 incidents of killing and maiming of children by the Defence and Security Forces, however, they were not listed in the Secretary General's 2024 CAAC report.<sup>97</sup> On February 25, 2024, Human Rights Watch reported that the Burkina Faso military “summarily executed at least 223 civilians, including 56 children, in two villages” in the Yatenga.<sup>98</sup> OHCHR expressed alarm about the reported incidents and called for independent, impartial investigation and a lifting of restrictions on media outlets who reported on the attacks.<sup>99</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—are both listed for abduction of children in the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC. While the Secretary-General's CAAC report makes two separate listings for these Boko Haram splinter groups, not all of the reporting disaggregates by factions. Thus, Watchlist makes the following recommendations jointly for both JAS and ISWAP with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 CAAC report.*

### 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

The 2024 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC verified 118 instances of killing and maiming in the Lake Chad basin in 2023, although the report does not specify which actor perpetrated these violations.<sup>100</sup> JAS and ISWAP were responsible for most of the overall grave

<sup>97</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 235.

<sup>98</sup> UNSC, 'Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel,' UN Doc S/2024/521, <https://docs.un.org/en/s/2024/521>, para 23; Human Rights Watch, 'Burkina Faso: Army Massacres 223 Villagers,' April 25, 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/25/burkina-faso-army-massacres-223-villagers>.

<sup>99</sup> UN News, 'Burkina Faso: UN rights office deeply alarmed at reported killing of 220 villagers,' April 26, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/04/1149061> (accessed March 26, 2025).

<sup>100</sup> UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 270.

violations included in the report for the Lake Chad basin during 2023. Evidence indicates that JAS and ISWAP have been responsible for killing and maiming in 2024. In September 2024, in one incident alone in Nigeria, fighters suspected to be associated with ISWAP killed at least 170 people, mostly men and boys.<sup>101</sup> ACLED documented three incidents in which an improvised explosive device suspected to have been planted by JAS or ISWAP killed a total of eight children.<sup>102</sup> ACLED documented another incident that occurred in August 2024 in which suspected JAS militants killed three students while they were sleeping.<sup>103</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate to identify which non-state armed groups (JAS and/or ISWAP) are responsible for killing and maiming children in the Lake Chad basin and determine if listing is warranted.

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

The 2024 Secretary-General's annual report on CAAC verified 11 attacks on schools and hospitals in the Lake Chad basin in 2023, although the report does not specify which actor perpetrated these violations.<sup>104</sup> Nevertheless, the report notes that JAS and ISWAP were responsible for the vast majority of the grave violations overall perpetrated in the Lake Chad basin during 2023. Of the 2,258 grave violations documented in the 2024 report, JAS was responsible for 1,475 grave violations and ISWAP was responsible for 519 grave violations.<sup>105</sup> Evidence

indicates that JAS and ISWAP have been responsible for attacks on schools and hospitals in 2024. ACLED and Insecurity Insight documented numerous incidents in which JAS or ISWAP militants (or militants suspected to be associated with these groups) looted medical supplies and attacked health facilities and/or medical personnel.<sup>106</sup> In one incident, ISWAP militants broke into a health facility and looted drugs, including children's vaccines.<sup>107</sup> In another incident, ISWAP militants attacked a health center at a refugee camp, killing a nurse.<sup>108</sup> ACLED also documented an incident in which a JAS militant fired indiscriminately near a school, killing one person and injuring another.<sup>109</sup>

Watchlist recommends that the Secretary-General further investigate to identify which non-state armed groups (JAS and/or ISWAP) are responsible for attacks on schools and hospitals in the Lake Chad basin and determine if listing is warranted.

## **Nigeria**

*Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad (JAS) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP)—splinter groups of Boko Haram—are listed for all five “trigger” grave violations in the Secretary-General's 2024 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 2024 report on CAAC.*

101 Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2025: Nigeria,' <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/nigeria>.

102 ACLED dataset, Event ID NIG38035; NIG34755; NIG34518.

103 ACLED dataset, Event ID NIG38287.

104 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 270.

105 Ibid.

106 ACLED dataset, Event ID NIR30973, NIR30857, NIG40212, NIG40211; Insecurity Insight, Event ID 46128, 47360, 86627, 46128.

107 Insecurity Insight, ID 46128.

108 ACLED dataset; Event ID CHA1962.

109 ACLED dataset; Event ID NIG39226.

## Ukraine

*In the Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC, Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups are listed for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist recommends the following with regard to the Secretary-General's 2025 CAAC report.*

### Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups

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

In the 2024 Secretary-General's annual CAAC report, the UN attributed 122 incidents of child abduction to Russian armed forces, affiliated armed groups, and Russian authorities located in territories of Ukraine temporarily controlled or occupied by the Russian Federation.<sup>110</sup> These abductions began in 2022 and continued into 2023. In addition to these, the UN verified the transfer or deportation of 33 children within the temporarily controlled or occupied territories of Ukraine or to the Russian Federation.

Though ongoing reports since 2022 vary in number, the large-scale displacement of Ukrainian children is not disputed by either Ukrainian or Russian authorities.<sup>111</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>112</sup> Ukrainian authorities record the figure of transferred children as 19,546.<sup>113</sup> The majority of forced transfers and deportations took place in 2022, 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. Furthermore, Yale's Humanitarian Research Lab highlighted changes in the policies that aim at making the children's new reality a permanent one. Among them, they identify changes in legislation, moving from fostering to adoption, the possibility for guardians to request Russian citizenship for children, listing Ukrainian children on Russian child placement databases, and moving children to different regions of Russia, among others.<sup>114</sup>

Many of these children are assumed to remain in the location they were transferred to considering the very low reported numbers of returned children. Of the 122 verified cases of child abduction reported in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual report, at least 12 had been reunited with parents/guardians.<sup>115</sup> News media have reported the return of around thirty of the children.<sup>116</sup> The Ukrainian Government reports that there have been 1,243 child returnees in total since February 2022.<sup>117</sup>

While forced transfer and deportation of Ukrainian children by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups is widely analyzed and reported as amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and/or violations

110 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 327.

111 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), <https://www.osce.org/odihr/542751>, 1.

112 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), <https://reliefweb.int/report/ukraine/humanitarian-research-lab-yale-school-public-health-russias-systematic-program-re-education-adoption-ukraines-children-enruuk>, 5.

113 Ukraine Ministry of Reintegration, 'Children of War,' <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/> (accessed March 2, 2025).

114 Raymond, Nathaniel A., Oona A. Hathaway, Caitlin N. Howarth, and Kaveh Khoshnood et al., 'Intentional, Systematic, & Widespread: Russia's Program of Coerced Adoption and Fostering of Ukraine's Children,' December 3, 2024. Humanitarian Research Lab at Yale School of Public Health: New Haven. <https://files-profile.medicine.yale.edu/documents/aa3bcb47-c4db-4d86-994c-22489c70581b> (accessed March 12, 2025), p. 2.

115 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 327.

116 Reuters, 'Five deported Ukrainian children return home, officials say,' (9 Dec 2024), <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/five-deported-ukrainian-children-return-home-officials-say-2024-12-10/> (accessed March 2, 2025); Al Jazeera, 'Russia and Ukraine to exchange more children after Qatar-brokered deal,' (29 Nov 2024), <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/29/russia-and-ukraine-to-exchange-more-children-after-qatar-brokered-deal> (accessed March 2, 2025).

117 Ukraine Ministry of Reintegration, 'Children of War,' <https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/> (accessed March 26, 2025).



of international humanitarian and human rights law,<sup>118</sup> the UN has not explicitly identified the deportations and transfers as the grave violation of abduction.<sup>119</sup> The non-consensual transfer or deportation of children will only amount to the grave violation of abduction, pursuant to the Office of the Special Representative's working definition, if the intention was clearly exploitative.<sup>120</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>121</sup> including

indoctrination through re-education, compulsory military education, and erasure of cultural identity.<sup>122</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.

118 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 Hellesstveit 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), <https://www.osce.org/odihr/542751> (accessed April 1, 2025), p. 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 1, 2025).

119 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 327.

120 OSRSG-CAAC and UNICEF, 'Guidance note on Abduction,' (2022), [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/22-00040\\_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC\\_FINAL\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/22-00040_Abduction-Guidance-for-CAAC_FINAL_WEB-1.pdf), 14-15.

121 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](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2023/12/26/world/europe/ukraine-war-children-russia.html) (accessed April 5, 2024).

122 OHCHR, 'Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine, 1 September 2024 to 1 November 2024,' <https://www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/41st-periodic-report-human-rights-situation-ukraine-1-september-30> (accessed March 12, 2025), paras 75-80; Raymond, Nathaniel A., Oona A. Hathaway, Caitlin N. Howarth, and Kaveh Khoshnood et al., 'Intentional, Systematic, & Widespread: Russia's Program of Coerced Adoption and Fostering of Ukraine's Children,' December 3, 2024, p. 26-28.

### 3. Situations in the Report/ Parties Not Yet Listed

The Secretary-General's 2024 report on CAAC further includes information on the situation of children in Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti, Lebanon, Libya, Mozambique, Niger, and Pakistan. However, no parties to these conflicts were listed in the annexes to the report. 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

The UN verified 50 attacks on schools and hospitals in Cameroon in 2024. However, for the vast majority of these attacks (45), the UN was unable to identify the perpetrator.<sup>123</sup> Armed separatist groups in the Northwest and Southwest regions of the country intensified their campaign against education in 2024. These groups reportedly imposed lockdowns, set fire to school buildings, abducted teachers and students, and enforced school boycotts through broad threats against students, parents, and teachers, resulting in injuries and fatalities

among staff. OCHA documented 44 incidents of attacks on schools in these regions in 2024 but does not identify the perpetrators.<sup>124</sup> Additionally, ACLED reported at least six attacks on schools in the Northwest by separatists affiliated with the Ambazonia Defence Forces, along with more than 40 child abductions linked to their anti-education campaign.<sup>125</sup>

On February 11, National Youth Day, an improvised explosive device planted by Ambazonian separatists primarily affected students in the Nord-Ouest, resulting in at least two civilian deaths and 83 injuries, 11 of which required amputations.<sup>126</sup> The UN also reported on the incident but did not identify a perpetrator.<sup>127</sup> These reports did not specify the number of children among the victims, though UNICEF reports that the victims were primarily women and children. OCHA reporting also noted an increase in attacks on schools around the start of the academic year in September, coinciding with a lockdown imposed by non-state armed groups.<sup>128</sup>

Watchlist recommends 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.

123 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 249.

124 OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 71,' (November 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-situation-report-no-71-november-2024> (accessed March 26, 2025); OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 69,' (September 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-situation-report-no69-september-2024> (accessed March 26, 2025); OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 68,' (September 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/cameroon/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-situation-report-no-68-august-2024> (accessed March 26, 2025).

125 ACLED dataset, Event ID CAO12923, CAO8623, CAO13451, CAO15482, CAO14993, CAO15642, CAO12926, CAO13045, CAO14205, CAO14411, CAO14550, and CAO15955.

126 ACLED dataset, Event ID CAO8508.

127 UNICEF, 'Humanitarian Situation Report No. 1,' <https://www.unicef.org/media/156271/file/Cameroon-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.1-31-March-2024.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2025).

128 OCHA, 'Cameroon: North-West and South-West - Situation Report No. 69,' (September 2024).

## Ethiopia

### Ethiopian National Defense Forces (ENDF) and security forces

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

In his 2024 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General identified four instances of killing and maiming by the ENDF.<sup>129</sup> In 2024, OHCHR, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty International documented that the ENDF was responsible for killing dozens of civilians (OHCHR documented 89 civilians killed, but the number varies according to different sources) in the town of Merawi in the Amhara region of Ethiopia.<sup>130</sup> The reports did not specify how many of these civilians were children. Human Rights Watch documented another incident on February 24 in Merawi in which Ethiopian armed forces executed up to eight civilians, including at least two children.<sup>131</sup> According to ACLED, the use of mortar fire by Ethiopian security forces resulted in the death of at least 10 children total in two separate incidents in July and December 2024.<sup>132</sup> In other incidents, ENDF drone strikes killed children, including a drone strike in October 2024 that killed one child,<sup>133</sup> as well as drone strikes carried out in November 2024 that killed at least 43 people and injured 21 others, including 13 children.<sup>134</sup>

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

Reporting by ACLED and Insecurity Insight implicates ENDF soldiers in at least six incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in the context of the conflict in the Amhara region of Ethiopia throughout 2024.<sup>135</sup> In one of these incidents, in February 2024, ENDF soldiers reportedly raped five females, including three girls, one of whom was under 15 years old and was subsequently taken to a hospital.<sup>136</sup> In other instances documented by ACLED and Insecurity Insight, at least 11 children were reportedly subjected to sexual violence by members of the ENDF, and three girls were allegedly raped by the Oromia Regional Police.<sup>137</sup> Three victims in these incidents died following the attack.<sup>138</sup>

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

In his 2024 report on CAAC, the Secretary-General identified five instances of the military use of schools by the ENDF.<sup>139</sup> The report verified 12 attacks on schools by unidentified perpetrators.<sup>140</sup> During 2024, data from Insight Insecurity and ACLED show that the ENDF carried out at least five drone strikes against educational facilities, as well as related protected persons.<sup>141</sup> Insecurity Insight also documented additional ENDF attacks against

129 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 259.

130 Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia: Military Executes Dozens in Amhara Region,' (April 4, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/ethiopia-military-executes-dozens-amhara-region> (accessed March 5, 2025); Amnesty International, 'Ethiopia: Merawi killings should be independently investigated' (April 12, 2024) <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/04/ethiopia-merawi-killings-should-be-independently-investigated/> (accessed March 5, 2025); and OHCHR, 'Update on the Human Rights Situation in Ethiopia,' (June 2024), para 34, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/2024-06/OHCHR-Update-HR-situation-in-Ethiopia-in-2023.pdf> (accessed March 5, 2025).

131 Human Rights Watch, 'Ethiopia: Military Executes Dozens in Amhara Region,' (April 4, 2024), <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/04/04/ethiopia-military-executes-dozens-amhara-region> (accessed March 5, 2025).

132 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH14354, ETH12979.

133 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH14348.

134 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH14019; Insight Insecurity, Event ID 86853, 87649.

135 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH11572, ETH11611, ETH13052. Insight Insecurity, Event ID 44741, 54485, 54491.

136 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH11611.

137 Insight Insecurity, Event ID 82633, 82641, 82642, 61097, 82636, 87723; ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH13564.

138 Insight Insecurity, Event ID 61097; ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH13564.

139 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 261.

140 Ibid.

141 ACLED dataset, Event ID ETH14217; Insecurity Insight, Event ID 20460, 85458, 86915, 86916, 86917.

educational facilities.<sup>142</sup> Human Rights Watch documented attacks against hospitals perpetrated by the Ethiopian military and other security forces in the Amhara region between August 2023 and May 2024, including at least one incident in January 2024 in which soldiers entered a hospital and detained a medical professional.<sup>143</sup>

## Haiti

The Secretary-General added Haiti as a situation of concern in his 2023 CAAC report.<sup>144</sup> In the 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN verified 383 grave violations attributed to 23 different armed perpetrators.<sup>145</sup> Of these, 157 grave violations were attributed to unknown or “other” armed gangs.

In 2024, violence against children in Haiti reached even more alarming levels, characterized by armed gang attacks and clashes between Haitian National Police and armed gangs.<sup>146</sup> According to UNICEF, grave violations against children were as much as 12 times higher in the fourth quarter of 2024 than during the same period in 2023.<sup>147</sup> Following Prime Minister Ariel Henry’s announcement in February that elections would be held no later than August 31, 2025, and the prospect of deploying the Multinational Security Support (MSS) mission in June, gangs from two opposing coalitions (G9 and G-Pèp) announced their intention to overthrow the Prime Minister, forming the “Viv Ansanm” (Living Together) alliance.<sup>148</sup> Given severe access constraints

caused by the country’s insecurity, the widespread nature of violence, and the large number of perpetrators, 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 Viv Ansanm Alliance, including the G9 Family and Allies led by Jimmy Chérizier (“G9 Alliance”), and G-Pèp Alliance, the Gran Grif gang, as well as the vigilante movement known as Bwa Kalé**

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

In the 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN reported 19 children had been recruited and used in 2023 by at least eight identified armed gangs and another four children by unidentified perpetrators.<sup>149</sup> In 2024, the recruitment of children by gangs continued to rise at an alarming rate. According to estimates from the UN Panel of Experts on Haiti and UNICEF, children represent between 30 and 54 percent of all gang members,<sup>150</sup> while UNICEF estimates that the number of children recruited by armed groups in Haiti increased by 70 percent in the

142 Insecurity Insight, Event ID 20459, 86387, 86859, 86860, 87825, 75373.

143 Human Rights Watch, “‘If the Soldier Dies, It’s on You’ Attacks on Medical Care in Ethiopia’s Amhara Conflict,” 2024, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media\\_2024/07/ethiopia0724web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/media_2024/07/ethiopia0724web.pdf) (accessed March 3, 2025).

144 UNGA and UNSC, ‘Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,’ (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 349.

145 Ibid., para 70. Analysis by Watchlist.

146 OSRSG-CAAC, ‘Haiti: Persistent, Brutal Crisis Having Devastating Impact on Children,’ (November 12, 2024), <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2024/11/haiti-persistent-brutal-crisis-having-devastating-impact-on-children/> (accessed March 13, 2025); UNICEF, ‘Haiti: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 11, End-of-Year Sitrep,’ December 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/media/167411/file/UNICEF%20Haiti%20Humanitarian%20Situation%20Report%20No.%2011%20,%20End%20of%20Year%202024.pdf.pdf> (accessed March 13, 2025); OHCHR, ‘Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,’ A/HRC/57/41.

147 UNICEF, ‘Haiti: Humanitarian Situation Report No. 11, End-of-Year Sitrep,’ December 2024.

148 UNSC, ‘Final report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2700 (2023),’ S/2024/704, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/704> (accessed March 23, 2025), para 14.

149 UNGA and UNSC, ‘Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,’ (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 71.

150 UNSC, ‘Final report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2700 (2023),’ UN Doc S/2024/704, para 127; UN News, ‘Haiti’s children: Crisis demands urgent action,’ December 2, 2024, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1157686>, (accessed March 13, 2025).

last year.<sup>151</sup> Additionally, the United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti (BINUH) received reports that gangs recruited more children, likely in anticipation of the deployment of the MSS mission.<sup>152</sup>

While most reports are not able to provide precise figures related to the number of children recruited by each gang, BINUH has highlighted analysis implicating Grand Ravine, 5 Second gang, and Vitelhomme's gang as among the most active recruiters of children.<sup>153</sup> A February 2025 report by Amnesty International, based on field research between May and October 2024, documented 11 children recruited and used by armed gangs, including Delmas 6, Baz Pilate, Ti Bwa, Baz Belè, Grand Ravine, 103 Zombie, 5 Segon, and Kraze Baryè.<sup>154</sup>

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

In the 2024 annual CAAC report, the UN attributed the killing and maiming of 206 children in 2023 to eight identified armed gangs, while 96 of these casualties were not attributed to a specific gang.<sup>155</sup> In 2024, reports of children killed and injured in Haiti continued. OHCHR reported that from January to June 2024, 68 children were killed and 63 were injured during gang violence incidents.<sup>156</sup> Most of the incidents involved indiscriminate attacks against the population, as well as clashes between gangs or with police operations. Several

incidents were attributed to the Grand Ravine gang, led by Renel Destina. For example, BINUH reported that, on June 30, in Gressier, at least three boys were executed inside their residences, where members of the Grand Ravine gang had broken in looking for individuals belonging to a local "self-defense" group.<sup>157</sup> The same gang intercepted several boats carrying local residents attempting to bypass the National Road 2 under their control. According to BINUH, dozens of people, including children, were kidnapped or killed by gunshot or machetes when using these boats.<sup>158</sup> From June to August 2024, BINUH reported 39 children were victims of indiscriminate killings.<sup>159</sup> One of the most violent attacks took place on June 15 in the Artibonite department, where at least 11 people were killed or seriously injured, including an infant, presumably attributed to the Gran Grif and Kokorat San Ras gangs.<sup>160</sup>

Reports of violence also involved the so-called local defense groups or Bwa Kalé. For example, OHCHR reported that at least three boys were killed within the context of Bwa Kalé violence between January 1 and June 30, 2024.<sup>161</sup> One incident in July involved the shooting death of a 10-year-old boy and burning of his body by a vigilante group in the Solino neighborhood of Port-au-Prince, after the boy was accused of being a gang informant.<sup>162</sup> Amnesty International further documented 12 children who were injured (10) or lost their lives (2) as a result of gang-related violence and associated incidents.<sup>163</sup>

151 UNICEF, 'Number of children in Haiti recruited by armed groups soars by 70 per cent in one year,' 25 November 2024, <https://www.unicef.org/haiti/en/press-releases/number-children-haiti-recruited-armed-groups-soars-70-cent-one-year-unicef> (accessed March 13, 2025).

152 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' 30 July 2024, [https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quarterly\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_human\\_rights\\_situation\\_in\\_haiti.pdf](https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quarterly_report_on_the_human_rights_situation_in_haiti.pdf) (accessed March 26, 2025), p. 8.

153 UNSC, 'Interim report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2700 (2023),' UN Doc S/2024/253, para 61.

154 Amnesty International, 'I'm a Child, Why Did This Happen to Me?': Gangs' Assault on Childhood in Haiti,' February 12, 2025, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/amr36/8875/2025/en/> (accessed March 2, 2025), p. 5-6.

155 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 73.

156 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, para 10.

157 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' 30 July 2024, p. 8.

158 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: January - March 2024,' 19 April 2024, [https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quarterly\\_report\\_on\\_the\\_situation\\_of\\_human\\_rights\\_in\\_haiti\\_january-march\\_2024.pdf](https://binuh.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/quarterly_report_on_the_situation_of_human_rights_in_haiti_january-march_2024.pdf) (accessed March 13, 2025), p. 6.

159 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/742, <http://www.undocs.org/s/2024/742> (accessed March 13, 2025), para 24.

160 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' p. 6.

161 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, para 13.

162 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/742, para 47.

163 Amnesty International, 'I'm a Child, Why Did This Happen to Me?': Gangs' Assault on Childhood in Haiti,' p. 42.



The gangs linked to these cases include Brooklyn, Simon Pelé, Belekou, Boston, and Grand Ravine. At least two cases involved crossfire between gangs and the police.

Children have been affected by Haitian Police operations against gangs. In the first quarter of 2024, OHCHR reported that 36 children were killed or injured during police patrols.<sup>164</sup> BINUH has also warned of rising levels of children killed during police operations against gangs.<sup>165</sup>

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

The UN verified 41 cases of rape and other forms of sexual assault against children in Haiti as documented in the Secretary-General's 2024 annual CAAC report.<sup>166</sup> Eleven of these cases were attributed to unknown armed gangs, and the rest were attributed to 12 different armed gangs. Pervasive, alarming reports of sexual violence, including collective rape, against women and girls in Haiti perpetrated by gang members, continued and increased in 2024.<sup>167</sup> According to the OSRSG-CAAC, there was a 1,000 percent increase in verified cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, particularly girls, in 2024 compared to 2023.<sup>168</sup> According to OHCHR, women and girls have been intercepted by gangs controlling "rival neighborhoods," and some have been forced into exploitative sexual relations with gang members or killed after refusing to enter into such relationships.<sup>169</sup> Girls have been subjected to sexual violence on the route to school. For example, in

an incident in January, a 17-year-old girl was reportedly caught by a group of armed individuals while going to her school and raped several times by multiple perpetrators before being shot and killed.<sup>170</sup>

Displacement has also increased risks for children, including within sites housing internally displaced persons (IDPs). For example, according to OHCHR, in the first quarter of 2024, at least 216 cases of sexual violence, including the collective rape of children under five years old, were reported in IDP sites in Port-au-Prince.<sup>171</sup> In one attack reported on March 9, members of the 5 Second gang broke into an IDP site and raped two girls aged three and 12 years old.<sup>172</sup> The UN documented 74 cases of sexual violence, including 22 girls, perpetrated by gangs between June and September 2024.<sup>173</sup>

Amnesty International also documented 18 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in Haiti in incidents involving 400 Mawozo, Grand Ravine, 5 Segon, and possibly Chien Méchant.<sup>174</sup>

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

In the Secretary-General's 2024 report, the UN verified 37 attacks on schools and hospitals carried out by seven armed gangs and unidentified armed gangs.<sup>175</sup> Schools and hospitals continued to be a recurrent target of gang violence in 2024, severely restricting access to education and health services.

164 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, para 14.

165 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' p. 4.

166 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 74.

167 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 27, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/508, <http://www.undocs.org/s/2024/508> (accessed March 13, 2025), para 38; Human Rights Watch, 'Haiti: Scarce Protection as Sexual Violence Escalates,' (November 25, 2024), <http://hrw.org/news/2024/11/25/haiti-scarce-protection-sexual-violence-escalates> (accessed March 13, 2025).

168 OSRSG-CAAC, 'Haiti: Persistent, Brutal Crisis Having Devastating Impact on Children,' (November 12, 2024).

169 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, par. 16.

170 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (April 16, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/310, <http://www.undocs.org/s/2024/310> (accessed March 13, 2025), para 41.

171 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, para 22.

172 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 27, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/508, para 38.

173 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/742, para 49.

174 Amnesty International, "'I'm a Child, Why Did This Happen to Me?': Gangs' Assault on Childhood in Haiti,' p. 29-30.

175 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 75.



According to BINUH, from April to May 2024, at least eight schools were looted and/or burned in the Port-au-Prince, Gressier and Croix-des-Bouquets communes.<sup>176</sup> During the 2023–2024 academic year, 919 schools were affected by violence and insecurity, with nearly half closing completely, impacting at least 50,000 students.<sup>177</sup> Schools have also reportedly been occupied by gangs such as Terre Noire, Grand Ravine, Warf Jérémie, Kraze Barye, Charbon, and Canaan.<sup>178</sup>

Health facilities have also come under attack. For example, armed gangs looted at least three health care centers between January and March 2024 in the communes of Delmas, Port-au-Prince, and Tabarre.<sup>179</sup> Gangs have reportedly attacked the Haiti State University Hospital<sup>180</sup> and the Bernard Mevs Hospital.<sup>181</sup>

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

From January to June 2024, BINUH reported 37 cases of child kidnappings. The main perpetrators were gang members operating in metropolitan Port-au-Prince and the Artibonite Department.<sup>182</sup> Abductions were reportedly motivated by ransom but may have also been linked to recruitment and/or sexual violence. Members of the Grand Ravine gang reportedly kidnapped a 16-year-old girl, along with two other women, while travelling in a public transport vehicle in the Mariani district (Gressier). The young girl and the other two women were held for several days, during which they

were repeatedly raped.<sup>183</sup> The UN has documented kidnappings by the Kokorat San Ras and Gran Grif gangs between October 2023 to June 2024.<sup>184</sup>

## **Lebanon**

Lebanon is a longstanding situation of concern in the Secretary-General's annual CAAC reports. In light of the escalation of cross-border violence between Israeli armed and security forces and Hezbollah between September and November 2024, Watchlist makes the following recommendation regarding the Secretary-General's 2025 annual report on CAAC.

### **Israeli armed and security forces**

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

Operations carried out by Israeli armed and security forces in the context of the hostilities against Hezbollah severely affected civilians, including children. According to the UN, this conflict has been the deadliest period Lebanon has experienced since 2006, with 3,961 persons reportedly killed since October 8, 2023, including 248 children, as well as 16,520 injured, including 1,436 children.<sup>185</sup> According to UNICEF, an average of three children were killed every day during October and November 2024 in Lebanon.<sup>186</sup>

176 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' para 39.

177 UNICEF, 'Humanitarian Action for Children 2025 - Haiti, December 5, 2024,' <https://www.unicef.org/appeals/haiti> (accessed March 13, 2025).

178 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2700 (2023),' UN Doc S/2024/704, Annex 32.

179 UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (April 16, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/310, para 39.

180 OHCHR, 'Situation of Human Rights in Haiti, Interim report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights,' A/HRC/57/41, para 21.

181 OCHA, Press Release: Humanitarian Coordinator calls for an end to attacks on medical staff and facilities, December 27, 2024, <https://www.unocha.org/publications/report/haiti/humanitarian-coordinator-calls-end-attacks-medical-staff-and-facilities>; OHCHR, 'Press Release: UN expert William O'Neill says deeply concerned by attacks on health care sector,' (January 3, 2025), <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/01/haiti-un-expert-william-oneill-says-deeply-concerned-attacks-health-care>.

182 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: January - March 2024,' (19 April 2024), p. 7; BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' (30 July 2024), p. 8; UNSC, 'United Nations Integrated Office in Haiti: Report of the Secretary-General,' (October 15, 2024) UN Doc S/2024/742, para 24.

183 BINUH, 'Human rights situation - Main trends - Quarterly report: April - June 2024,' p. 8.

184 UNSC, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on Haiti submitted pursuant to resolution 2700 (2023),' UN Doc S/2024/704, Annex 33.

185 UNICEF, 'Humanitarian Action for Children 2025 - Lebanon,' (December 4, 2024), <https://reliefweb.int/report/lebanon/humanitarian-action-children-2025-lebanon>.

186 UNICEF, 'Lebanon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 11 - Year-End Report: Reporting Period: 23 September 2024 – 31 December 2024,' <https://www.unicef.org/media/167096/file/Lebanon-Humanitarian-SitRep-No.11-31-December-2024.pdf> (accessed March 26, 2025).

In particular, air strikes carried out by Israeli forces in the southern regions of Lebanon reportedly led to child casualties. ACLED's database recorded at least 142 children killed or maimed by Israeli air strikes in 2024.<sup>187</sup> For example, on June 1, 2024, sixteen children between the ages of four and 14 were injured in an air strike carried out by Israeli forces in Tyr.<sup>188</sup> In another incident, following Israeli air strikes on September 23 and 24, 2024, in which Israel claimed to have hit over 1,000 military targets, the Lebanese Health Ministry reported 569 people were killed and 1,845 others were injured, including 50 children as a result of these strikes.<sup>189</sup> The UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) also reported incidents of Israeli air strikes that reportedly resulted in death or injury of children. For example, on September 20, the Israeli forces launched an air strike on densely populated suburbs of Beirut. According to the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, as cited in the UNIFIL report, the attack resulted in the collapse of two residential buildings, killing 55 people, including an unspecified number of children.<sup>190</sup> Child casualties have reportedly continued after the ceasefire agreement in November 2024, with OHCHR reporting the killing of more than 27 civilians (including three children) in air strikes in Lebanon by the end of 2024.<sup>191</sup>

In addition to air strikes, two children were among those killed on September 17 and 18 when thousands of pagers and handheld radios simultaneously exploded across Lebanon and Syria in attacks aimed at Hezbollah members.<sup>192</sup> Media reports attribute this attack to Israeli forces<sup>193</sup> and UN experts have called for an impartial investigation.<sup>194</sup>

## Niger

### Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS)

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

The Secretary General's 2024 CAAC report verified the abduction of 116 children in Niger by unidentified perpetrators.<sup>195</sup> JAS is listed for abduction in the contexts of Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin, but not for Niger.<sup>196</sup> For 2024, ACLED documented 13 incidents of abduction in Niger attributed to militants associated with (or suspected to be associated with) JAS.<sup>197</sup> According to ACLED, at least five of these incidents entailed abduction of children (at least 19 children abducted in total).<sup>198</sup>

187 ACLED dataset, Event ID LBN19382; LBN30594; LBN27104; LBN22647; LBN21233; LBN31104; LBN31181; LBN31181; LBN30983; LBN30595; LBN30551; LBN29747; LBN29695; LBN29973; LBN29806; LBN29110; LBN29280; LBN28467; LBN28490; LBN28411; LBN27683; LBN27845; LBN27896; LBN26769; LBN26784; LBN27113; LBN27102; LBN26134; LBN26105; LBN26140; LBN24734; LBN24283; LBN23278; LBN23180; LBN22952; LBN22799; LBN22548; LBN21312; LBN21614.

188 ACLED dataset, Event ID LBN21614.

189 ACLED dataset, Event ID LBN26134; Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2025: Lebanon,' <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/lebanon> (accessed March 26, 2025); Security Council Report, 'The situation in the Middle East: Emergency Meeting on Lebanon,' (September 25, 2024), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/09/the-situation-in-the-middle-east-emergency-meeting-on-lebanon.php> (accessed March 26, 2025), UNSC, '9733rd meeting, provisional meeting record,' (September 25, 2024) UN Doc S/PV.9733, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/PV.9733> (accessed March 26, 2025), p. 2.

190 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 June to 20 October 2024,' (November 13, 2024), UN Doc S/2024/817, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2024/817> (accessed March 26, 2025), para 10.

191 UNICEF, 'Lebanon Humanitarian Situation Report No. 11 - Year-End Report: Reporting Period: 23 September 2024 – 31 December 2024.'

192 UNSC, 'Implementation of Security Council resolution 1701 (2006) during the period from 21 June to 20 October 2024,' (November 13, 2024), UN Doc S/2024/817, para 9.

193 Human Rights Watch, 'World Report 2025: Lebanon'; Security Council Report, 'The Middle East, including the Palestinian Question: Meeting on the Situation in Lebanon,' (September 19, 2025), <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/whatsinblue/2024/09/the-middle-east-including-the-palestinian-question-meeting-on-the-situation-in-lebanon.php> (accessed March 26, 2025).

194 OHCHR, 'Exploding Pagers and Radios: A Terrifying Violation of International Law, say UN Experts,' September 19, 2024, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2024/09/exploding-pagers-and-radios-terrifying-violation-international-law-say-un> (accessed March 26, 2025).

195 UNGA and UNSC, 'Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General,' (June 3, 2024) UN Doc A/78/842-S/2024/384, para 290.

196 Ibid., 49.

197 ACLED dataset, Event ID NIR30526, NIR30728, NIR30844, NIR30845, NIR30979, NIR30562, NIR30620, NIR30788, NIR30962, NIR30980, NIR31012, NIR31020, NIR31021.

198 ACLED dataset, Event ID NIR30526, NIR30728, NIR30844, NIR30845, and NIR30979.









