



May 28, 2025

Secretary-General António Guterres
United Nations Headquarters, S-3800
New York, NY 10017

Re: 2025 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We are writing regarding your forthcoming annual report on children and armed conflict (CAAC). As you finalize your decisions regarding the annexes listing perpetrators of grave violations against children, we urge you to ensure the publication of a complete list of perpetrators that is evidence-based and accurately reflects data collected and verified by the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM).

As nongovernmental organizations working to alleviate suffering in humanitarian settings and protect human rights, we strongly support UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC as concrete tools for improving the protection of children in war. The MRM, the annual CAAC report, and its annexed list of perpetrators are a crucial foundation for enhancing the protection of children, ending and preventing violations, promoting compliance with international law, and contributing to accountability. These tools are central to drawing the attention of the Security Council to the situation of children, providing an analysis of the variety of violations committed against children, and paving the way for the UN's engagement with parties to conflict.

As your office and that of your Special Representative have consistently emphasized, these tools have proven effective in changing warring parties' behaviors and strengthening protections for children. However, these mechanisms will only remain powerful if they are credible and consistently applied to all perpetrators in all contexts. Furthermore, gathering and verifying evidence of grave violations frequently involves considerable security risks for those participating in the MRM. When listing and de-listing decisions do not consistently reflect this data, they can undermine these efforts, and it can appear as if these risks were taken in vain.

We reiterate our call to ensure that all parties to conflict that are responsible for committing a pattern of grave violations against children are listed in the annexes in accordance with the criteria set out in the 2010 annual CAAC report (S/2010/181). Furthermore, parties should only be de-listed once they have signed and fully implemented an action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children and ceased commission of the violation(s) for which they are listed for at least one full reporting cycle (i.e., one year), per the same 2010 criteria.

Despite the MRM's important contributions over the past twenty years, children continue to face the devastating impacts of armed conflict, and grave violations continue to be committed against them 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 2022.¹ 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 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. Civil society organizations have previously expressed disappointment with significant disparities between the evidence presented in the annual CAAC report and the perpetrators listed in the annexes.²

As you finalize this year's report and make your decisions regarding listings, we urge you to take into account the recommendations made by the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict in its "Credible List" policy note published in April 2025.³

We look forward to the publication of your annual report and reaffirm our call for a complete and accurate list of perpetrators of grave violations against children, as a strong and effective tool for promoting the protection of children in armed conflict and compliance with international law.

Sincerely,

Amnesty International
Avaaz
Ceasefire Centre for Civilian Rights
Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
ChildFund Alliance
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security
Defense for Children International (DCI)
Franciscans International
Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
Human Rights Watch
Legal Action Worldwide (LAW)
Nonviolence Peaceforce
PAX
Pax Christi International
Plan International
Save the Children
Street Child
Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
World Vision International

Cc: Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

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 See, for example, previous open letters dated [May 30, 2024](#), [May 31, 2023](#), [May 31, 2022](#), [May 12, 2021](#), [June 22, 2020](#), [May 11, 2020](#), [May 24, 2019](#). See also: Eminent Persons Group, Keeping the Promise: An Independent Review of the UN's Annual List of Perpetrators of Grave Violations Against Children, 2010-2020, March 2021, <https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/eminent-persons-group-report-final.pdf>.

³ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, "A Credible List": Recommendations for the Secretary-General's 2024 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, April 2025, <https://watchlist.org/publications/a-credible-list-recommendations-for-the-secretary-generals-2025-annual-report-on-children-and-armed-conflict/>.