

Keeping the Promise

An Independent Review of the
UN's Annual List of Perpetrators
of Grave Violations against Children,
2010 to 2020



Eminent Persons Group

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Executive Summary



In a series of landmark resolutions starting in 2001, the United Nations Security Council has placed the plight of children affected by conflict squarely on the international agenda. Building on the strong international consensus that children must never be used as soldiers, the Security Council unequivocally condemned a set of serious violations affecting children in war, triggering concrete consequences for perpetrators.

The Security Council not only requested that the Secretary-General report on these grave violations every year, but it also created a unique accountability mechanism by asking the Secretary-General to attach a list of perpetrators of grave violations to his annual report. Over the years, the Council has expanded the list of violations that may trigger listing, which now includes the recruitment and use of children; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions.

The UN has invested special attention, resources, and expertise in promoting the children and armed conflict (CAAC) agenda. Its engagement on behalf of children has led to important policy shifts and prompted actions that have had positive impact on the lives of children over the past two decades. With its Resolution 1612 (2005), the Security Council established the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) to document and rigorously verify grave violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict, currently operational in 14 countries. It also created a dedicated working group to consider specific country situations. The Secretary-General's listing of perpetrators has led dozens of parties to conflict to engage with the UN to remedy their record, resulting in at least 33 action plans adopted by listed parties to end violations against children. These efforts have resulted in concrete, positive change in children's lives, including an end to violations in some contexts and the release of more than 150,000 children from armed forces and armed groups.¹

The list of perpetrators in the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict has been the linchpin of this system of accountability. Sadly, over the past few years, especially since 2015, the process for listing perpetrators of grave violations has become increasingly tainted by political considerations. Influential Member States have successfully evaded listing, some lobbying to be dropped from the list or to avoid being listed altogether, despite committing

grave violations against children. Analysis for this report has revealed persistent and disturbing discrepancies and double standards in the listing of perpetrators.

As experts on children's rights and protection who have been supportive of the CAAC agenda since its inception, we, the Eminent Persons Group (EPG), undertook this assessment due to our growing concern that the agenda is becoming increasingly compromised, to the detriment of its potential to protect children. Our assessment examines the Secretary-General's decisions to list and 'delist' parties in the last decade, in view of relevant Security Council resolutions on CAAC and the Secretary-General's own stated criteria for listing and delisting. Thoroughly reviewing the information documented in the annual reports on children and armed conflict, side-by-side with each year's list of perpetrators, provided evidence that only deepened our concern that the Secretary-General is not using the listing mechanism to hold all perpetrators to account without fear or favor.

In response to a request from the Security Council in its Resolution 1882 (2009),² the Secretary-General clarified the criteria for listing and delisting perpetrators of grave violations in 2010, indicating that the threshold for listing a party entailed a "pattern" of violations involving multiple victims. The criteria stipulate that a party will be delisted from the annexes based on its full implementation of a UN action plan to end violations and UN-verified information that the party has ceased all violations for a period of at least one reporting cycle (i.e., one year).

Our assessment identified dozens of cases where multiple and egregious violations did not lead to listing, or where listing decisions reflected unexplained inconsistencies. Too often, some parties to conflict were justifiably listed for a certain number of violations, while other parties to conflict with a comparable number of violations evaded listing. To highlight a few particularly severe examples, eight parties to conflict over the period reviewed—from 2010 to 2020—were responsible for killing and maiming more than 100 children in a one-year period, yet were not listed. They included state armed forces

¹ Security Council Report, September 2020 Monthly Forecast, Thematic Issues: Children and Armed Conflict, August 31, 2020, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2020-09/children-and-armed-conflict-4.php> (accessed January 10, 2021).

² UN Security Council, Resolution 1882 (2009), S/RES/1882 (2009), [https://undocs.org/s/res/1882\(2009\)](https://undocs.org/s/res/1882(2009)) (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 19.

or international forces in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Israel, Nigeria, and Yemen, and non-state armed groups (NSAGs) in Afghanistan and Syria. Such a large number of violations appears to represent a clear pattern of the abuse of children.

In recent years, several parties to conflict were prematurely removed from the list, even though they did not satisfy the Secretary-General's existing delisting criteria. We reviewed 21 instances where parties to conflict were removed from the list between 2011 and 2020. In six of these instances, parties were delisted because they had ended violations and successfully implemented action plans, in line with the Secretary-General's 2010 criteria. In 12 instances, parties were removed from the list because they ceased to exist or had integrated into other armed forces or armed groups who continued to be listed.

In the remaining three instances, the groups were removed from the list even though they did not meet the conditions set out for delisting by the Secretary-General. All three instances took place in recent years: the 2018 delisting of the Saudi-led coalition for attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen; the 2020 delisting of the Saudi-led coalition for killing and maiming children in Yemen; and the 2020 delisting of the Tatmadaw Kyi for recruitment and use of children in Myanmar. In each case, the party was delisted despite a continuing pattern of UN-verified and documented violations.

We recognize that the whole of the UN system—including Member States, the Security Council, UN agencies and country teams, the Secretary-General, and his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC)—is responsible for the protection of children in armed conflict. The success of the children and armed conflict agenda depends on the commitment and leadership of all of these actors. However, the framework established by the Security Council places a special responsibility on the Secretary-General to name perpetrators so that they can be held accountable.

Given our findings, we urgently call on the Secretary-General to ensure that the listing and delisting process going forward is consistent and grounded in evidence collected and verified by the MRM. Only an evidence-based approach can restore the list as a credible tool that leverages the stature of his office to hold perpetrators of grave violations against children accountable, treating parties to conflict strictly based on the facts of their conduct, not their political influence. The Security Council and all UN Member States should similarly ensure that the CAAC agenda is fully implemented and supported—fulfilling the promise they made to children caught in war two decades ago—and that all parties to conflict who commit grave violations against children are listed in the Secretary-General's report. Holding all perpetrators accountable is critical for protecting children in war and creating lasting conditions for peace, security, and stability.



The UN's CAAC architecture, including the Secretary-General's annual list of perpetrators, has led to concrete, positive change in children's lives, including the release of more than **150,000 children** from armed forces and armed groups.



About the Eminent Persons Group

The Eminent Persons Group (EPG) was convened by the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict ('Watchlist'), a global network of human rights and humanitarian organizations which strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. Internationally respected child rights experts were invited to join the EPG based on their significant contributions in shaping and supporting the CAAC agenda since its inception. The mandate of the EPG was to conduct an independent review of the Secretary-General's listing and delisting decisions from 2010 through 2020, in light of the evidence documented in the reports, and provide its conclusions and recommendations.

The EPG's members include:

- **Lieutenant-General Roméo Dallaire** (Ret'd), founder of the Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security, former Force Commander of the UN Assistance Mission for Rwanda during the 1994 genocide;
- **Yanghee Lee**, former chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child and former Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Myanmar;
- **Benyam Dawit Mezmur**, former member as well as Special Rapporteur on children and armed conflict of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, Professor of Law at the University of the Western Cape;

- **Allan Rock**, former ambassador and permanent representative of Canada to the UN and former chair of the Group of Friends of Children and Armed Conflict in New York.

Watchlist assisted the EPG in this project by providing data analysis and other support. The EPG carefully reviewed the evidence and provided inputs and analysis to develop this report's findings and recommendations, and it fully endorses the report. Members of the EPG served in their individual capacity.

Methodology

The EPG was assisted by two independent consultants in conducting an analysis of the Secretary-General's eleven annual reports on the situation of children affected by armed conflict between 2010 and 2020, supplemented by various publicly available reports for 18 country situations.

We reviewed those country situations where there were parties listed between 2010 and 2020. In addition, the consultants reviewed information on grave violations in situations of concern included in the narrative of the Secretary-General's annual reports but where parties were not listed in the annexes, identifying those perpetrators responsible for high numbers of verified violations. The team reviewed the narrative sections of all eleven annual reports, assessing all the violations documented in the reports and noting whether or not parties were listed in the annexes for each type of trigger violation documented.

In addition to the Secretary-General's previous annual reports on children and armed conflict, the consultants reviewed additional sources, including reports from UN agencies and offices, peacekeeping and special political missions, and commissions of inquiry; and documentation by reputable international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with relevant expertise. The team also reviewed credible news media sources. The review focused on the five violations that trigger listing: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape

and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions. The sixth grave violation that is formally part of the CAAC mandate, denial of humanitarian access, does not currently trigger listing.

Although the EPG recognizes that a wide range of factors impact the CAAC agenda, the review focused primarily on the listing and delisting process. In general, the review was conducted based on publicly available reports and information, not information from closed-door discussions.

The team's method of analysis was derived from principles found in the Security Council's relevant resolutions on children and armed conflict and the Secretary-General's previous annual reports, in particular the criteria for listing and delisting spelled out in the 2010 annual report. While not setting a standard numerical threshold that should necessarily trigger a violation, the EPG paid particular attention 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.³

³ The team paid particular attention to reviewing cases where in one year a party to conflict was responsible for 10 or more documented cases of recruitment and use, sexual violence, or attacks on schools and hospitals, but the party was not listed in the 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, since it is a notoriously difficult violation to verify, 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.

All examples of omissions and inconsistencies presented in this report are ones that the EPG considers particularly egregious, but the report does not cover all such examples. Each and every grave violation against a child is a serious matter, and our focus on selected examples of violations should not be taken in any way to imply that full consideration of the listing of perpetrators in other cases is of lesser importance—especially in light of the fact that scores of violations go undocumented in the first place.⁴

Regarding delisting, the assessment reviewed all cases where a party to conflict had been listed in the Secretary-General’s annual reports since 2010 and then removed from the list in the annexes. The assessment also reviewed all cases of ‘first listing’ between 2011 and 2020, i.e., each instance where a party was first listed in a particular year and where the number of violations it committed that year was reported.



⁴ Within the scope of this assessment, the EPG considered parties to conflict whom the UN had found to have committed grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict and who are named in the narrative of the annual reports; this does not preclude parties, including UN peacekeepers, alleged to have committed grave violations who were not identified in annual reports.

Background

In a series of resolutions starting in 2001 with Resolution 1379, the Security Council requested that the Secretary-General name perpetrators of grave violations against children by listing them in an annex to the annual report on children and armed conflict ('annual report').⁵ Initially this listing was restricted to parties that recruit or use children as soldiers. Over the past 20 years, the "triggers" for listing have been expanded to include other violations against children. In 2020, the list included 66 state and non-state perpetrators responsible for one or more of the following violations against children: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions.

In 2005, to strengthen the UN's capacity to monitor, report on, and respond to such violations, the Security Council established the MRM.⁶ The MRM aims to systematically gather accurate, timely, objective, and reliable information on grave violations committed against children in those countries where parties to conflict are listed in the Secretary-General's annual report. Today, it is operational in 14 countries. When a party is listed in the annual report's annexes, the MRM is established in the country in question, with a Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR), co-chaired by UNICEF and the highest UN representative in-country. The CTFMR is mandated to collect and verify grave violations against

children for use in UN reporting, as well as to inform UN response on the ground, provide services to affected boys and girls, and engage with parties to armed conflict to foster compliance with international standards.⁷

At the request of the Security Council, through its Resolution 1882 (2009), then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon set out criteria in the 2010 annual report for the listing and delisting of parties that commit grave violations against children.⁸ The report clarified that the threshold for listing a party entailed a "pattern" of violations involving multiple victims and intentional, willful conduct. It emphasized that parties

⁵ The Secretary-General makes the final determination regarding listing or delisting parties to conflict, and he is assisted and advised in this role by the SRSG-CAAC, the leading UN advocate for the protection and well-being of children affected by conflict.

⁶ UN Security Council, Resolution 1612 (2005), S/RES/1612 (2005), [https://undocs.org/s/res/1612\(2005\)](https://undocs.org/s/res/1612(2005)) (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 2.

⁷ The SRSG-CAAC oversees the MRM at the global level, in close cooperation with UNICEF and the UN Department of Peace Operations (DPO). The SRSG-CAAC is responsible at the headquarters level for policy and guidance, information integration, preparation of reports, and advocacy, while relying on the MRM and CTFMR in-country to collect and verify information about grave violations against children and engage with parties to the conflict.

⁸ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), April 13, 2010, <https://undocs.org/A/64/742> (accessed January 10, 2021), paras. 176-180.

would not be listed for a single, isolated incident or the “random conduct” of an individual acting alone. The criteria stipulate that a party will be delisted from the annexes based on its full implementation

of a UN action plan to end violations and UN-verified information that the party has ceased all violations for a period of at least one reporting cycle (i.e., one year).

Criteria for listing parties (based on relevant Security Council resolutions and the Secretary-General’s 2010 report)



- **Recruitment and use:** The Secretary-General should list parties “that recruit or use children in violation of the international obligations applicable to them.”
- **Killing and maiming:** The Secretary-General should list parties “that engage, in contravention of applicable international law, in patterns of killing and maiming of children [...] in situations of armed conflict.”
- **Rape and other forms of sexual violence:** The Secretary-General should list parties “that engage, in contravention of applicable international law, in patterns of [...] rape and other sexual violence against children, in situations of armed conflict.”
- **Attacks on schools and hospitals:** The Secretary-General should list parties that engage in “recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals.”
- **Abductions:** The Secretary-General should list parties that engage in “patterns of abduction of children in situations of armed conflict.”

Criteria for ‘delisting’ parties (based on the Secretary-General’s 2010 report)



The criteria that were set out in the Secretary-General’s 2010 report stipulate that a party would be delisted from the annexes based on its **full implementation of a UN action plan** to end those violations and **UN-verified information that the party had ceased all violations for a period of at least one reporting cycle** (i.e., one year).

The listing mechanism, bolstered by the MRM, has served as an important and effective tool for the protection of children in armed conflict, as discussed in the next section. However, in recent years, the integrity of the process for listing and delisting perpetrators has come into question, as certain parties to conflict have been removed from the list without meeting the criteria for delisting laid out in 2010, and others have evaded listing altogether, despite credible, UN-verified documentation of violations. In at least one case, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated publicly that Member States had applied undue pressure to evade listing, including threats to withdraw UN funding.⁹ When warring parties are not treated by the same standards, the credibility of the entire CAAC agenda is seriously undermined.

The unequal treatment of violators, be they state or non-state actors, when it comes to the protection of children in armed conflict situations, should be of great concern to the entire UN system and all those who wish to promote peace, stability, and human rights globally. In light of the seriousness of these concerns and their impact on the credibility of the UN, we undertook this independent assessment of how the listing and delisting criteria established in 2010 have been applied in practice over the past decade. The assessment set out to examine listing and delisting decisions based on the Secretary-General's own criteria and in view of the information contained in the annual reports.

As this assessment demonstrates, the Secretary-General's reports have failed to list some parties in annual report annexes, even when systematic violations they have committed have been detailed in the body of the reports.

Other parties have been delisted although they have not met the stated delisting criteria. While there is a lack of transparency as to how the Secretary-General and the SRS-CAAC define a pattern of violations, our assessment has identified dozens of cases where an apparent pattern of egregious violations did not lead to listing or where listing decisions reflected inexplicable inconsistencies.

The MRM maintains a high standard of verification for incidents. All information gathered is assessed for credibility, cross-checked, analyzed, and verified by members of the CTFMR before it is entered into the monitoring system for use in the annual report.¹⁰ As a result of this verification standard, as well as access, logistical, and resourcing challenges—even prior to compounding challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic—it is clear that the violations reported in the Secretary-General's annual report often reflect only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the overall number of grave violations committed against children.¹¹ It is, therefore, deeply troubling that even those well-documented incidents—sometimes affecting hundreds of victims—have not consistently triggered the listing of their perpetrators in the report's annexes.

⁹ In 2016, Ban Ki-moon initially listed the Saudi-led coalition for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen, but just three days later, he reversed course and issued a retraction of the listing. See: Emmons, Alex, and Zaid Jilani, "U.N. Chief Admits He Removed Saudi Arabia from Child-Killer List Due to Extortion," *The Intercept*, June 16, 2016, <https://theintercept.com/2016/06/09/u-n-chief-admits-he-removed-saudi-arabia-from-child-killer-list-due-to-extortion/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

¹⁰ It is important to note that the MRM, as a UN-led process, only reports information collected or cross-checked by the UN to the Security Council, which can lead to under-reporting of incidents. This is because UN actors are not always able to verify all cases reported due to access challenges, security restrictions, or limited capacity. Information that is not verified by the UN is categorized as 'reported,' though it can still contribute to context analysis and inform the response to violations on the ground.

¹¹ For example, a 2010 population-based survey on grave violations against children in the DRC suggested the MRM was less than 1 percent complete in South Kivu: Alfaro, Stephanie, et al., "Estimating human rights violations in South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo: A population-based survey," *Vulnerable Children and Youth Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 3, September 2012, <https://jhu.pure.elsevier.com/en/publications/estimating-human-rights-violations-in-south-kivu-province-democra-4> (accessed January 10, 2021), pp. 201-210. See also: Bennouna, Cyril, et al., "Monitoring and reporting attacks on education in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Somalia," *Disasters*, Vol. 42, Issue 2, August 9, 2017, <https://doi.org/10.1111/disa.12245> (accessed January 10, 2021).

How the List Has Protected Children

The Secretary-General's list provides an important step towards accountability for those who commit grave violations against children in armed conflict by clearly identifying the warring parties responsible. The mechanism also serves as a foundation for the UN to dialogue with warring parties, secure concrete commitments to end and prevent violations through time-bound action plans, and create tangible, positive changes for children affected by war. It has contributed to concrete, positive impacts on the lives of children, including the signing of at least 33 concrete action plans by warring parties to end violations against children and the release of more than 150,000 children from armed forces and armed groups over the past two decades.¹²

When the listing process is objective, clearly articulated, and evidence-based, dialogue with listed parties is enhanced, often leading to concrete improvements in the conduct of listed parties. The Security Council mandates CTFMRs to conduct dialogue with listed parties about the steps that must be taken to end violations. The key elements of such action plans include: a halt to violations; official command orders to halt violations and discipline perpetrators; granting the UN access for ongoing monitoring and verification of compliance; and accountability measures.¹³ As a result of dialogue and action plans, listed parties have implemented screening procedures to prevent underage recruitment, trained troops on child

protection, established child protection units within their structure, and initiated disciplinary measures, including criminal prosecution, against violators.

Since the beginning of the CAAC mandate, 12 parties have fully complied with their commitments and were subsequently delisted. Between 2011 and 2020, the time period that is the focus of this assessment, six parties to conflict (three state actors and three NSAGs) were delisted following successful completion of their action plans.¹⁴

In Nepal, for example, the United Communist Party of Nepal – Maoist (UCPN-M) was first listed for the recruitment and use of children in 2003¹⁵ and signed

¹² Security Council Report, September 2020 Monthly Forecast, Thematic Issues: Children and Armed Conflict.

¹³ The elements of action plans are specified in the Secretary-General's 2010 annual report: Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), 2010, para. 8.

¹⁴ The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) were delisted for recruitment and use in 2017 but not for sexual violence. This number does not include delistings for other reasons, such as the dissolution of an armed group. For more information see Annex I.

¹⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/58/546-S/2003/1053), November 10, 2003, <https://undocs.org/A/58/546> (accessed January 10, 2021), Annex II.

an action plan in December 2009.¹⁶ In early 2010, the UCPN-M identified 2,973 army personnel as children and discharged them. In 2011, the UCPN-M took further steps to suspend payments to children and end the provision of housing. After full implementation of the action plan, the Secretary-General delisted the UCPN-M in 2012.¹⁷

The Government of Chad, whose armed forces first appeared on the Secretary-General's list in 2006,¹⁸ signed an action plan with the UN in 2011. With continuous engagement by the SRSG-CAAC and other UN officials, the Government took steps to implement the plan, which included UN verification visits to military bases, legislative reform to prohibit the use of child soldiers, and punitive measures against recruiters of children.¹⁹ The Government appointed focal points in the Ministries of Defense and Social Welfare to ensure implementation of the action plan, and the army issued a series of military directives prohibiting the recruitment of children.²⁰ The President issued a directive confirming 18 as the minimum age for all recruitment and a presidential decree criminalizing child recruitment, which was widely disseminated among commanders.²¹ The Government set up child protection units in all eight of its security zones and, between August and October 2013, screened 3,800 troops.²² In 2014, the Secretary-General reported that Chad had fully implemented its plan, that no new cases of child recruitment by its army were reported the previous year, and removed the Chadian armed forces from the list.²³

The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) were first listed for the recruitment and use of children in 2002. The Government signed an action plan in 2012²⁴ and took significant steps to implement its plan. For example, the Government set up joint technical working groups at both national and provincial levels to implement the plan, the Ministry of Defense issued directives prohibiting violations against children, and the FARDC designated child protection focal points in eastern DRC, where children were at greatest risk of such abuse. In 2012 and 2013, 214 children were separated from the FARDC, and 269 were prevented from joining. The UN helped screen 17,000 FARDC troops, and in 2015, eight members of the FARDC and armed groups were arrested for recruiting children to their ranks.²⁵ By 2015, the FARDC's recruitment and use of children had virtually stopped. In 2017, the Secretary-General reported that the FARDC had taken all necessary steps in their action plan pertaining to the recruitment and use of children and were delisted for that violation. However, the FARDC remain listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence.

In the Philippines, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front was delisted for the recruitment and use of children in 2017 after implementing its action plan. The UN has been documenting lessons learned from this process, especially the release of 1,869 children, the reintegration programs benefiting disengaged children and their families, and the manner in which the action plan and its results have

¹⁶ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), 2010, para. 11.

¹⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/66/782-S/2012/261), April 26, 2012, <https://undocs.org/A/66/782> (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 244.

¹⁸ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/61/529-S/2006/826), October 26, 2006, <https://undocs.org/S/2006/826> (accessed January 10, 2021), Annex II.

¹⁹ Davis, Ian, Daniel Miller, and Krishna Shah, "Chad, Prohibiting the Use of Child Soldiers," IHL in Action website, undated, <https://ihl-in-action.icrc.org/case-study/chad-prohibiting-use-child-soldiers> (accessed January 10, 2021).

²⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/67/845-S/2013/245), May 15, 2013, <https://undocs.org/A/67/845> (accessed January 10, 2021), paras. 46-47.

²¹ Davis, Miller, and Shah, "Chad, Prohibiting the Use of Child Soldiers," IHL in Action website.

²² UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/68/878-S/2014/339), May 15, 2014, <https://undocs.org/A/68/878> (accessed January 10, 2021), paras. 46-50.

²³ *Ibid.*, para. 217. Even after the delisting, however, concerns were raised about continued child protection gaps. *See, for example:* Child Soldiers International, "Concerns about Chad's child protection record," July 8, 2015, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/childsoldiersinternationalchadbriefingjuly2015final276496.pdf> (accessed January 31, 2021).

²⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/68/878-S/2014/339), 2014, paras. 53-56.

²⁵ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/70/836-S/2016/360), April 20, 2016, <https://undocs.org/A/70/836> (accessed January 10, 2021), paras 54-55.

boosted peace dialogues between the armed group and the Government. The Government has also passed a Children in Situations of Armed Conflict (CSAC) Law.²⁶

In 2018, the Sudanese Armed Forces' successful completion of an action plan with the UN led to their delisting for the recruitment and use of children. The institutional mechanisms established by the action plan remain in place and continue to be the framework of cooperation between Sudanese authorities and the UN to prevent violations. Nonetheless, the SRSR-CAAC has called for continued efforts to better protect children, including putting in place a national prevention plan to address all six grave violations, especially in the context of the political transition period and peace process.²⁷

The signing and implementation of action plans have clearly had significant positive impacts. Action plan commitments could be further strengthened by making them public, to support community engagement and civil society efforts to monitor successful implementation and compliance.²⁸

Even in the absence of formal action plans, the implementation of the MRM and engagement by the UN, NGOs, and local civil society have led to other concrete, positive impacts for children on the ground. In addition, MRM data has also triggered preventive action and programmatic response for affected children.²⁹



In Colombia, following the listing of several NSAGs in 2003,³⁰ the UN established a CTFMR. The reports generated by the CTFMR resulted in comprehensive conclusions from the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (2010, 2012, 2017).³¹ Although the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP) never signed an action plan, members of the CTFMR engaged with the Government on measures to protect children. When peace talks began between the Government and FARC-EP, high-level UN officials including the

²⁶ "Philippines: Significant Measures to Protect Conflict-Affected Children in Place but Full Implementation Essential for Effective Protection," OSRSG-CAAC press release, August 25, 2020, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2020/08/philippines-significant-measures-to-protect-conflict-affected-children-in-place-but-full-implementation-essential-for-effective-protection/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

²⁷ "Sudan: Peace Process Presents Opportunity to Better Protect Children as Grave Violations Continue," OSRSG-CAAC press release, July 22, 2020, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2020/07/sudan-peace-process-presents-opportunity-to-better-protect-children-as-grave-violations-continue/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

²⁸ See also: Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, "Action Plans to Prevent and End Violations against Children: The Role of Action Plans in the UN's Children and Armed Conflict Agenda," April 2013, <https://watchlist.org/publications/action-plans-to-prevent-and-end-violations-against-children/> (accessed February 17, 2021).

²⁹ OSRSG-CAAC/UNICEF/DPKO, "MRM Global Good Practices Study," November 2013, http://www.mrmtools.org/mrm/files/MRM_Good_Practice_Study_-_27_Nov_2013.pdf (accessed January 10, 2021), pp. 10 and 13.

³⁰ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/58/546-S/2003/1053), 2003, Annex II.

³¹ UN Security Council, Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Conclusions on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia (S/AC.51/2010/3), September 30, 2010, <https://www.undocs.org/S/AC.51/2010/3> (accessed January 10, 2021); UN Security Council, Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Conclusions on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia (S/AC.51/2012/4), December 21, 2012, <https://www.undocs.org/S/AC.51/2012/4> (accessed January 10, 2021); UN Security Council, Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, Conclusions on the Situation of Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia (S/AC.51/2017/1), March 7, 2017, <https://www.undocs.org/S/AC.51/2017/1> (accessed January 10, 2021).

SRSR-CAAC were invited to participate and advocated for the inclusion of children's rights. As a result, the FARC-EP increased its minimum age for recruitment to 18 in February 2016,³² and the peace agreement³³ signed by the Government and FARC-EP in 2016 had strong child protection measures, including provisions for the release and reintegration of children. This illustrates the importance of integrating child protection concerns during peace negotiations, an issue that has been highlighted by the SRSR-CAAC.³⁴ In 2018, the FARC-EP was delisted for recruitment and use. However, dissident groups of the FARC-EP have continued to recruit or use children in their ranks, including 82 children in 2018 and 40 children in 2019, but have not been listed.³⁵

Even in cases where parties have not yet fully implemented action plans, some have taken meaningful action to improve protections for children. Among these measures are specialized child protection units in armed forces, dedicated child protection training, and the signing of handover protocols to ensure the transfer of children from military custody to civilian authorities for reintegration.³⁶

Recent examples of progress have included: the criminalization of child recruitment and use in 2020 in the Central African Republic (CAR); a comprehensive action plan signed by the Government of South Sudan to address all six grave violations; and military command orders and other commitments aimed at ending and preventing grave violations issued by non-state actors

in CAR, the DRC, and Syria.³⁷ Several conflict-affected states, including the Philippines, Myanmar, and CAR, have adopted legislation protecting schools from attack and criminalizing the six grave violations. In 2019 alone, 13,200 children were released from parties to conflict. And while accountability efforts remain insufficient, perpetrators in various countries, including Myanmar, the DRC, and CAR, have been prosecuted for violations against children.³⁸ There are also accountability mechanisms that can be employed at the international level: several country-specific Security Council sanctions committees have the mandate to impose targeted sanctions on individuals or entities for violations against children; and the Security Council can refer a country situation to the International Criminal Court (ICC). To date, country-specific Security Council sanctions committees have imposed targeted sanctions (including asset freezes and/or travel bans) on at least 19 individuals and two armed groups known to have committed grave violations against children.³⁹

The progress made to date is a testament to the dedicated efforts of so many people within and outside of the UN system to tally the violations against children, initiate measures to protect them, and raise the cost of abuse. The Security Council has put powerful mechanisms in place that are able to stem and often stop grave violations against children. These mechanisms should be used to their fullest potential.

³² "Colombia: UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict Welcomes FARC-EP's Decision to End Child Recruitment," OSRSR-CAAC press release, February 11, 2016, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/press-release/colombia-farc-decision-to-end-child-recruitment/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

³³ *Acuerdo final para la terminación del conflicto y la construcción de una paz estable y duradera*, https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/Colombia%20Nuevo%20Acuerdo%20Final%2024%20Nov%202016_0.pdf (accessed January 10, 2021).

³⁴ See: OSRSR-CAAC, "Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict," February 2020, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Practical-guidance-for-mediators-to-protect-children-in-situations-of-armed-conflict.pdf> (accessed January 10, 2021).

³⁵ As documented in the 2019 and 2020 annual reports.

³⁶ "Seizing Opportunities to Better Protect Conflict-Affected Children is Critical as the World Responds to COVID-19," OSRSR-CAAC press release, August 25, 2020, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2020/08/seizing-opportunities-to-better-protect-conflict-affected-children-is-critical-as-the-world-responds-to-covid-19/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict: Statement by Ms. Virginia Gamba, SRSR for Children and Armed Conflict," June 23, 2020, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2020/06/open-debate-on-children-and-armed-conflict-statement-by-ms-virginia-gamba-srsg-for-children-and-armed-conflict/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

³⁹ See: Koller, David S. and Miriam Eckenfels-García, "Using Targeted Sanctions to End Violations Against Children in Armed Conflict," *Boston University International Law Journal*, Vol. 33:1, 2015, <https://www.corteidh.or.cr/tablas/r33548.pdf> (accessed February 16, 2021), p. 8.

Politicization, Undue Pressure, and the **Erosion of the List's Credibility**

The annexes of the Secretary-General's annual reports are often referred to as the 'list of shame' because of the stigma that comes with inclusion on the list. Listing is a powerful tool that can incentivize named parties to engage with the UN to end and prevent grave violations against children. Experience has also shown that the stigma attached to the list has prompted some warring parties to go to great lengths to avoid listing.

In recent years, the process for determining which parties are included has become increasingly politicized. Some parties—particularly governments—have exerted undue pressure on the Secretary-General to avoid being listed. Such efforts not only erode the list's credibility, but also set back efforts to protect children. The application of double standards for listing only further incentivizes violators to play politics, rather than undertaking good faith efforts to sign and implement action plans to end grave violations of children's rights.

Failure to List Perpetrators of Violations in the 2014 Gaza Conflict

In a particularly egregious omission in 2015, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon failed to list Israeli Government forces and the Palestinian armed group Hamas, despite the UN documenting at least 561 children killed and 4,271 injured in the conflict between Israel and Hamas in 2014, the vast majority of them by Israeli forces.⁴⁰ The Secretary-General's 2015 annual report acknowledges that the number of children killed by Israel in 2014 was the third highest in the world and the number of schools damaged or destroyed was the highest anywhere in the world that year, and yet Israel has not been listed in the report's annexes.⁴¹

⁴⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/69/926-S/2015/409), June 5, 2015, <https://undocs.org/S/2015/409> (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 80.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, para 110.

The then-SRSG-CAAC Leila Zerrougui reportedly recommended that Israeli forces and Hamas be listed in the 2015 report, but the Secretary-General overruled her recommendation.⁴² The UN's own board of inquiry found in a report released in April 2015 that Israel's military was responsible for seven attacks on UN schools in Gaza that were sheltering civilians, despite UN officials having shared the GPS coordinates of these schools with Israeli authorities.⁴³

At the time, the news media reported that Israel and the United States conducted intense lobbying to prevent Israel's listing.⁴⁴ Israel reportedly applied pressure on UN civil servants in Jerusalem not to recommend Israel's listing.⁴⁵ Samantha Power, the US ambassador to the UN at the time, reportedly appealed to the Secretary-General not to name Israel in the report's annexes.⁴⁶ According to media sources, the US administration apparently sought to shield Israel in an attempt to curry favor with Congress, ahead of an important vote on the Iran nuclear deal.⁴⁷

Violations by parties in Israel and Palestine have been referenced in every annual report on children and armed conflict since 2005, yet Israel's military and Palestinian armed groups have never been listed. For example, Israeli forces were not listed in the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report, despite

the fact that they were found responsible for killing 59 Palestinian children and wounding 2,756, many of whom had been participating in protests, in 2018.⁴⁸

Removal of the Saudi-Led Coalition from the List in 2016

In 2016, politicization of the annual report made international headlines yet again. According to the Secretary-General's annual report, at least 785 children were killed and 1,168 maimed in Yemen in 2015, 60 percent of them by Saudi-led coalition airstrikes. The report also documented the coalition's responsibility for more than 40 attacks against schools and hospitals in Yemen.⁴⁹ Then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon initially listed the Saudi-led coalition for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals, but just three days later, he reversed course and issued a retraction, removing the coalition from the list "pending review."⁵⁰

The Government of Saudi Arabia had reportedly threatened to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in humanitarian and counterterrorism funding to the UN if the coalition was not removed from the list.⁵¹ Between 2014 and 2016, Saudi Arabia contributed a total of more than US\$740 million on average annually to 34 UN organizations, and it was the fifth largest

⁴² Charbonneau, Louis, "U.N. report cites alleged Israel crimes against children, no consensus on listing," *Reuters*, June 6, 2015, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-israel-palestinians-children-un-idUSKBN0OL2DZ20150606> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁴³ "UN excludes Israel from child rights violators list," *Al Jazeera*, June 9, 2015, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/6/9/un-excludes-israel-from-child-rights-violators-list> (accessed January 10, 2021). See also: UN Security Council, "Annex: Summary by the Secretary-General of the report of the United Nations Headquarters Board of Inquiry into certain incidents that occurred in the Gaza Strip between 8 July 2014 and 26 August 2014," April 27, 2015, <https://undocs.org/S/2015/286> (accessed January 14, 2021).

⁴⁴ Lynch, Colum, "Israel's Shield," *Foreign Policy*, June 1, 2015, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/06/01/israels-shield/> (accessed January 10, 2021). See also: Charbonneau, "U.N. report cites alleged Israel crimes against children, no consensus on listing," *Reuters*.

⁴⁵ Sherwood, Harriet, "UN Officials Accused of Bowing to Israeli Pressure over Children's Rights List," *The Guardian*, March 17, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/17/un-officials-accused-buckling-israeli-pressure-childrens-rights-list> (accessed February 16, 2021).

⁴⁶ Lynch, "Israel's Shield," *Foreign Policy*.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907-S/2019/509), June 20, 2019, <https://undocs.org/A/73/907> (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 84.

⁴⁹ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/70/836-S/2016/360), 2016, paras. 167 and 169.

⁵⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Addendum (A/70/836/Add.1-S/2016/360/Add.1), June 24, 2016, <https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/A/70/836/Add.1> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁵¹ Lynch, Colum, "Saudi Arabia Threatened to Break Relations with U.N. Over Human Rights Criticism in Yemen," *Foreign Policy*, June 7, 2016, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2016/06/07/saudi-arabia-threatened-to-break-relations-with-un-over-human-rights-criticism-in-yemen/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

funder to the UN itself.⁵² While not naming Saudi Arabia specifically, Ban Ki-moon publicly acknowledged at a press conference that he had removed the Saudi-led coalition from the list due to threats to defund UN programs, calling the decision “one of the most painful and difficult decisions” he had had to make. Ban Ki-moon justified his decision by saying at-risk children would have suffered greatly from such budget cuts, while acknowledging that it was “unacceptable for member states to exert undue pressure.”⁵³

The then-Secretary-General undermined the credibility of the UN’s robust reporting when he retracted the listing and said the UN and the coalition would “review jointly the cases and numbers cited in the text,” in order to “reflect the highest standards of accuracy possible,” implying there may have been issues with the accuracy of reporting—though the results of the joint review (if it ever took place) were never made public and the numbers in the 2016 report were never revised.

The Threat to ‘Freeze’ the List in 2017

In 2017, a new Secretary-General, António Guterres, and a new SRSG-CAAC, Virginia Gamba, took office. In the wake of the Saudi-led coalition’s removal from the list in 2016, the Secretary-General and his advisors deliberated on how to proceed with the report and listings of parties to conflict.⁵⁴ According to leaked UN documents, senior UN leadership discussed the option of ‘freezing’ the list—meaning no new parties to conflict would be added to the list in 2017—and

beginning a new process of engagement with offending governments before their potential inclusion on the list, regardless of UN-documented evidence of violations.⁵⁵

Such a freeze would have run counter to the Security Council’s request to list perpetrators of the five trigger violations every year. Member States and civil society organizations advocated privately and publicly against freezing the list, calling for a complete and impartial list of all perpetrators to be published in the 2017 annual report.⁵⁶ The Secretary-General issued the much-anticipated annual report, with the Saudi-led coalition listed in the annexes for both killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals. The Secretary-General noted that as the UN documented 683 child casualties and 38 attacks on schools and hospitals perpetrated by the Saudi-led coalition, the coalition’s actions “objectively led” to its listing in the



The application of double standards for listing only further incentivizes violators to play politics, rather than undertaking good faith efforts to sign and implement action plans to end grave violations of children’s rights.

⁵² Saudi Arabia was the fifth largest funder to the UN, not including DPO and UN agencies. McArthur, John and Krista Rasmussen, “Who funds which multilateral organizations?” The Brookings Institution Global Views, No. 8, December 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/who-funds-which-multilateral-organizations/> (accessed January 31, 2021), pp. 5 and 9.

⁵³ Emmons and Jilani, “U.N. Chief Admits He Removed Saudi Arabia from Child-Killer List Due to Extortion,” *The Intercept*.

⁵⁴ Lynch, Colum, “Confidential U.N. Report Accuses Saudi Coalition of Killing Hundreds of Yemeni Kids,” *Foreign Policy*, August 16, 2017, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2017/08/16/confidential-u-n-report-accuses-saudi-coalition-of-killing-hundreds-of-children-in-yemen-conflict/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁵⁵ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, “No Freeze of UN Secretary-General’s 2017 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict,” <https://watchlist.org/no-freeze-un-secretary-generals-2017-annual-report-children-armed-conflict/> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁵⁶ See, for example: “UN Secretary-General Must List All Perpetrators of Children’s Rights Violations in War,” open letter to Secretary-General Guterres, June 1, 2017, <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/un-secretary-general-must-list-all-perpetrators-children-s-rights-violations-war-open> (accessed December 17, 2020).

annexes of the annual report.⁵⁷ For the first time, however, the Secretary-General split the list into two sections—one for “parties that have put in place measures to improve the protection of children” and another for parties that have not.⁵⁸ Media sources reported that the move may have been intended to appease listed parties and “dampen controversy” over the list.⁵⁹

Recent Delistings and Erosion of the List’s Credibility

In 2018, the Secretary-General delisted the Saudi-led coalition for attacks on schools and hospitals, despite UN verification of 24 such attacks by the coalition in 2017. The Houthis/Ansar Allah were found responsible for five UN-verified attacks on hospitals that year (and no documented attacks on schools), yet they continued to be listed for attacks on schools and hospitals.⁶⁰

In 2020, the Secretary-General delisted the Saudi-led coalition for killing and maiming despite finding the coalition responsible for killing or maiming 222 children in Yemen in 2019. He also delisted Myanmar’s armed forces, the Tatmadaw Kyi, who were delisted for recruitment and use of children even though the report found that they were responsible for eight cases of new recruitment and 197 cases of use in 2019.⁶¹

The delistings were met with wide-spread criticism from Member States and civil society groups.⁶² At the June 2020 Security Council open debate on children and armed conflict, 18 delegations, representing 37 Member States, highlighted the critical need to ensure that the Secretary-General’s annexed list of perpetrators remains credible, accurate, and based on objective criteria that are consistently applied across country situations.⁶³

The Secretary-General justified his decisions to delist the Saudi-led coalition and the Tatmadaw citing a “sustained significant decrease” in the number of violations committed by these two parties⁶⁴—but a reduction in the number of violations does not warrant delisting based on the existing 2010 criteria. While Saudi Arabia holds sway as a significant donor to the UN and also has powerful allies such as the US, who has reportedly intervened on its behalf in the past,⁶⁵ the reasons for the Tatmadaw’s premature delisting are less apparent.⁶⁶

⁵⁷ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/361–S/2017/821), August 24, 2017, <https://undocs.org/A/72/361> (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 244.

⁵⁸ Ibid, para. 243.

⁵⁹ Nichols, Michelle, “U.N. blacklists Saudi-led coalition for killing children in Yemen,” *Reuters*, October 5, 2017, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-yemen-security-saudi-un/u-n-blacklists-saudi-led-coalition-for-killing-children-in-yemen-idUSKBN1CA2NI> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁶⁰ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865–S/2018/465), May 16, 2018, <https://undocs.org/A/72/865> (accessed January 10, 2021), para. 208.

⁶¹ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), June 9, 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/525> (accessed January 10, 2021), paras. 123-124. In this assessment, we have used the name ‘Tatmadaw Kyi’ (sometimes also spelled ‘Tatmadaw Kyee’ elsewhere) following the naming convention used to identify Myanmar’s army in the Secretary-General’s annual reports. The country’s air force and navy (Tatmadaw Lay and Tatmadaw Yay, respectively) have not been listed in the annual reports.

⁶² Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, “Open Letter to the Secretary-General on the 2020 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict,” June 22, 2020, <https://watchlist.org/publications/open-letter-to-the-secretary-general-on-the-2020-annual-report-on-children-and-armed-conflict/> (accessed January 10, 2021); Human Rights Watch, “UN’s ‘List of Shame’ Goes Easy on Saudi-Led Coalition,” June 27, 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2018/06/27/uns-list-shame-goes-easy-saudi-led-coalition> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁶³ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, “Review of the June 2020 Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict,” September 2020, <https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/2020-open-debate-analysis-final.pdf> (accessed February 17, 2021), p. 4.

⁶⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), 2020, para. 240.

⁶⁵ Lynch, “Confidential U.N. Report Accuses Saudi Coalition of Killing Hundreds of Yemeni Kids,” *Foreign Policy*.

⁶⁶ As mentioned above, between 2014 and 2016, Saudi Arabia contributed a total of more than US\$740 million on average annually to 34 UN organizations. Its contributions to the UN during the same period (not including contributions to DPO and UN agencies) represented more than five percent of the UN’s budget. This placed it among the top five UN donors. See: McArthur and Rasmussen, “Who funds which multilateral organizations?” The Brookings Institution, *Global Views*, pp. 5 and 9.

Findings

The EPG reviewed how the listing and delisting criteria established in 2010 have been applied in practice over the past decade; this analysis is based on the Secretary-General's annual reports from 2010 through 2020.

In general, we find that reporting on grave violations of children's rights in the Secretary-General's annual reports has become more robust with the implementation of the UN's MRM. Over the years, the annual reports have progressively become more detailed and specific. The reports' narratives in more recent years are more likely to clearly name the parties to conflict responsible for perpetrating the violations and specify the numbers of violations documented.

Listing and Delisting Criteria

With its Resolution 1379 (2001), the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to attach to the annual report a list of parties to conflict that "recruit and use children in violation of the international obligations applicable to them."⁶⁷ Resolution 1379 did not specify any sort of threshold for inclusion on the Secretary-General's list—which suggests that the occurrence of any cases of recruitment and use in violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) or its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict (OPAC) should trigger listing, without requiring a demonstrated pattern of systematic violations.

In subsequent years, the Council expanded the set of violations that trigger listing to include killing and maiming (2009, with SCR 1882), rape and other forms of sexual violence (2009, SCR 1882), attacks on schools and hospitals (2011, SCR 1998), and abductions (2015, SCR 2225). In contrast to Resolution 1379, these subsequent resolutions did specify the need for a pattern or recurrence of violations in contravention of applicable international law in order to warrant listing a party to conflict. The criteria for listing specified in the Secretary-General's 2010 annual report echo this, noting that the threshold for listing "revolves around the notion of a 'pattern,'" elaborating that a "pattern" denotes a "methodical plan," "a system," and a collectivity of victims. It is a "multiple commission of acts" which, as such, excludes a single, isolated incident or the random conduct of an individual acting alone and presumes intentional, wilful [sic] conduct."⁶⁸ It did not, however, establish a numerical threshold of violations required for listing.

⁶⁷ UN Security Council, Resolution 1379 (2001), S/RES/1379 (2001), [https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/RES/1379\(2001\)](https://undocs.org/pdf?symbol=en/S/RES/1379(2001)) (accessed December 24, 2020), para. 16.

⁶⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), 2010, para. 175.

Regarding delisting, the criteria in the 2010 annual report stipulate that a party will be delisted from the annexes based on two conditions being met concurrently: 1) full implementation of a UN action plan to end violations; and 2) UN-verified information that the party has ceased all violations for a period of at least one reporting cycle (i.e., one year).

Following a review of the Secretary-General’s reports from 2010 to 2020, it appears that the mechanism of listing warring parties that commit grave violations against children in the reports’ annexes, intended to hold perpetrators accountable, has been used in a selective way that undermines the credibility of the Secretary-General’s reports and weakens their potential for impact.

Parties Not Listed Despite High Numbers of Violations

Parties responsible for committing a high number of violations, especially state actors, have frequently not been listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General’s

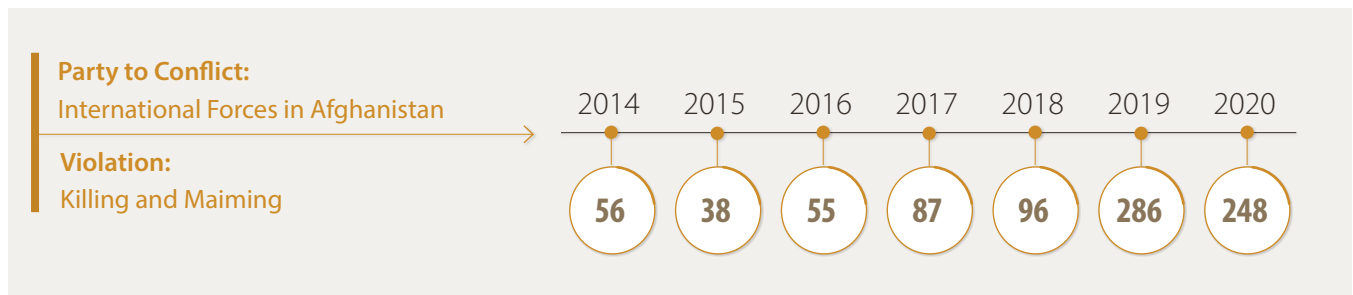
reports.⁶⁹ For example, between 2010 and 2020, at least eight parties to conflict were found responsible for killing and maiming more than 100 children in a single reporting period but were not listed, six of them state actors.⁷⁰ During the same period, four parties were responsible for more than 200 cases of recruitment and use in a single year and yet were not listed.⁷¹

In Afghanistan, International Forces and the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces have each been found responsible for killing and maiming hundreds of children since 2014, yet neither has ever been listed (see figures 1 and 2).

In the 2018 annual report, the Secretary-General attributed 261 child casualties to Nigerian Security Forces (NSF), but they were not listed.⁷²

In Somalia, the UN has documented dozens of cases of sexual violence against children at the hands of the Somali National Army each year—with 39 in 2020 alone—but it has never been listed (see figure 3).

Figure 1: Killing and Maiming by International Forces in Afghanistan Not Listed



⁶⁹ The examples below highlight particularly egregious examples where parties who have been documented to have committed violations were not listed; they are not exhaustive. In this section, when referencing years, we are referring to the year the annual report in question was published, rather than the reporting period or year the violations took place, unless otherwise noted. For example, violations reported in the annual report in 2020 actually took place during 2019.

⁷⁰ They included the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces every year from 2014 to 2020; International Forces in Afghanistan in 2010, 2019, and 2020; ISIL-affiliated groups in Afghanistan in 2016; the FARDC in the DRC in 2018; Israeli Forces in 2010, 2011, 2012, 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2020; the NSF in Nigeria in 2018; Free Syrian Army (FSA)-affiliated groups in Syria in 2015; and the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen in 2020. In addition, pro-government forces (the Afghan National Security Forces supported by international military forces) together were responsible for more than 100 violations in Afghanistan in 2012 and 2013.

⁷¹ The *Congrès national pour la défense du peuple* (CNDP) in the DRC (238 in 2010); the Tatmadaw Kyi in Myanmar (205 in 2020); and the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (SSNLM) (405 in 2018 and 224 in 2019) and Sudan People’s Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO), allied with Taban Deng Gai (207 in 2017), in South Sudan.

⁷² Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, para. 225.

Figure 2: Killing and Maiming by Afghan National Defence and Security Forces **Not Listed**

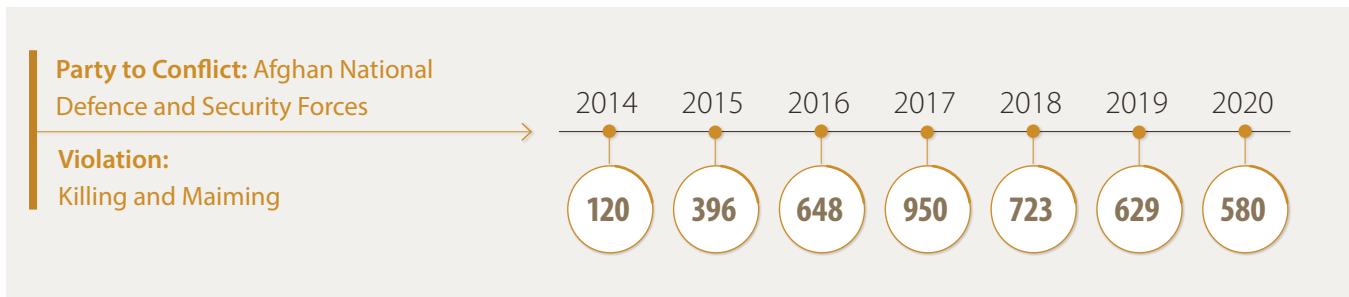
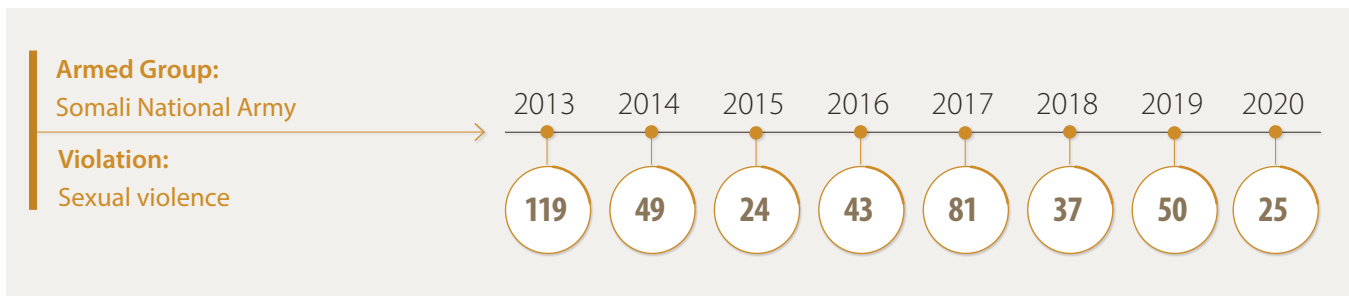


Figure 3: Sexual Violence by the Somali National Army **Not Listed**



Al-Shabaab was found responsible for a high number of attacks on schools and hospitals—an average of more than 24 committed each year from 2012 to 2017—but for those six years, it was not listed for this violation (see figure 4). In 2018, Al-Shabaab was finally listed in the annexes to the Secretary-General’s report for attacks on schools and hospitals (with 64 such attacks by the party in 2018). It is unclear why Al-Shabaab was not listed for this violation from 2012-2017.

The annual reports have also repeatedly found Israeli forces responsible for high levels of Palestinian child casualties, reporting over 1,525 killed and maimed in

2020 alone (see figure 5). Yet Israeli forces have yet to be included in the annexed list of violators. The UN has also documented killing and maiming violations by Palestinian armed groups, though in far smaller numbers.⁷³

Dozens of additional examples in the reports appear to demonstrate a pattern or recurrence of violations, based on the number of violations, but with the party in question not being listed. For example, between 2010 and 2020, there are more than 70 instances where a party is mentioned in the narrative of the report as having killed or maimed 20 or more children, but the party is not listed.⁷⁴

⁷³ See, for example: Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), 2020, para. 86.

⁷⁴ For information on the indicative thresholds used, see the Methodology section. For additional detail, see Annex II.

Figure 4: Attacks on Schools and Hospitals by Al-Shabaab in Somalia **Not Listed**

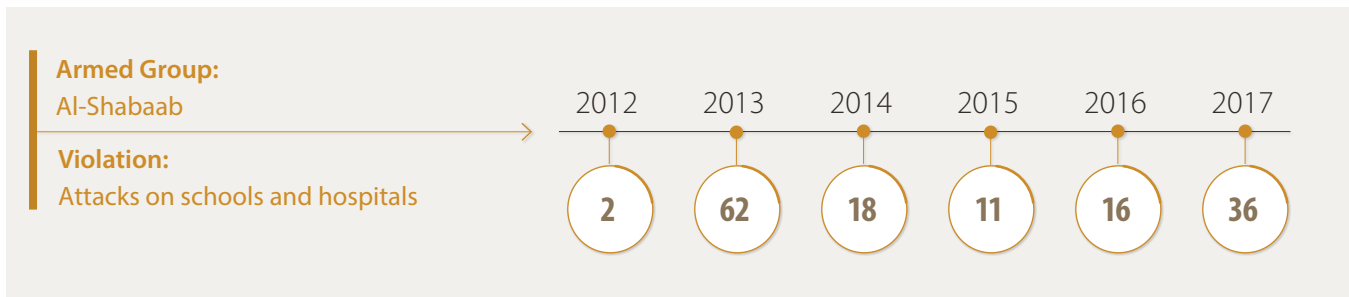
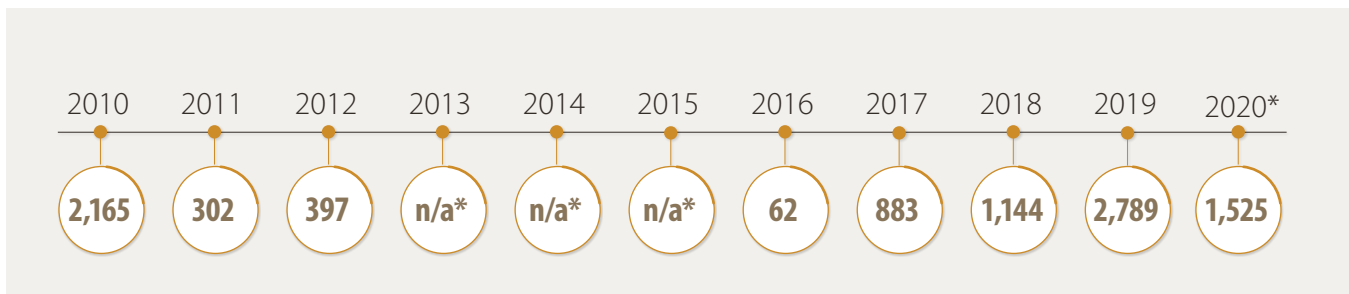


Figure 5: Killing and Maiming Violations by Israeli Forces **Not Listed**



*While at times numbers of violations are cited in the narrative of the report, the attribution to specific perpetrators is unclear.

Inconsistencies in Listings between Parties in the Same Country Situation

Our assessment of the Secretary-General’s annual reports from 2010 through 2020 also revealed a high degree of inconsistency in the listing of parties within the same country situation. Some parties are not listed in the annexes despite a large number of documented cases of grave violations attributed to them, whereas other parties with a smaller number of violations are listed.

For example, in the DRC, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a NSAG, was first listed for killing and maiming in 2015, although the annual report did not specify the number of children killed or maimed

by the group in that reporting period; in subsequent years, ADF continued to be listed, with the number of verified child casualties attributed to the armed group reported to be 20 in 2016, 19 in 2017, and nine in 2019. However, another NSAG, Kamuina Nsapu, was found responsible for higher numbers of casualties—killing and maiming at least 31 children in 2018 and 45 children in 2019—but was not listed.

In the Philippines, the Maute Group, a NSAG, was found responsible for 13 cases of recruitment and use in 2019 but was not listed.⁷⁵ By contrast, the New People’s Army (NPA), another NSAG in the Philippines, was listed with five cases of recruitment and use that same year.

⁷⁵ These cases occurred in 2017 but were not verified until the following year. See: Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907–S/2019/509), 2019, para. 224.

Disparities in Treatment of State and Non-State Actors

There are also discrepancies between the treatment of state security forces and NSAGs when it comes to listing in the reports' annexes. In Iraq, Somalia, and Yemen, for example, government forces have been found responsible for committing a high number of violations without being listed, while NSAGs have been listed for a similar number of violations—suggesting the two types of groups are held to a different standard.

Since 2013, the annual reports have consistently found the Somali National Army responsible for comparatively large numbers of cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence. In addition, although these figures are comparable to (and in some years, higher than) those attributed to Al-Shabaab, which has been listed for this violation since 2018, the Somali National Army has not been listed for rape and sexual violence in any of the annual reports (though it was listed for other violations). In the 2019 annual report, for example, the Somali National Army was documented to have perpetrated 50 verified cases of sexual violence, but was not listed for such, while Al-Shabaab was listed, with 46 cases.⁷⁶

In 2017, the UN reported 30 killing and maiming incidents by Iraqi Security Forces and the international counter-ISIL coalition, but they were not listed. By contrast, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), a NSAG, was found responsible for 13 incidents of targeted attacks against children that year and was listed.⁷⁷

In 2019, the UN reported 15 attacks on schools and three attacks on hospitals in Yemen by the Saudi-led coalition, and 15 attacks on schools and three attacks on hospitals by the Houthis/Ansar Allah. Despite the exact same number of verified attacks by both parties, the Houthis/Ansar Allah were listed and the Saudi-led coalition was not.⁷⁸

As mentioned above, the Secretary-General has stated that listing is based on a “pattern” of violations, involving multiple acts and a collectivity of victims, but has not defined further what constitutes a “pattern.” In an attempt to ascertain whether there is a set numerical threshold that triggers listing, we conducted a methodical review of the Secretary-General’s annual reports from 2010 to 2020. Our assessment examined the minimum numbers for which parties were first listed from 2011 to 2020. We found a wide variety in these minimum numbers across different violations, years, and types of actors (state vs. non-state), and that non-state actors were consistently listed for a lower number of violations than state actors. For example, while the lowest number of attacks on schools and hospitals for which a state group was first listed (across all years examined) was 33, the lowest number for which a NSAG was first listed for this violation was 13. This pattern held for all five types of trigger violations.⁷⁹

We note that it may not be possible to strictly apply a universal threshold in all country situations due to access and verification challenges. However, the current lack of consistency and transparency when it comes to how listing decisions are made raises concern that different standards are applied to various parties.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Ibid., para. 142.

⁷⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/361–S/2017/821), 2017, para. 78.

⁷⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907–S/2019/509), 2019, para. 193.

⁷⁹ These minimum numbers cannot be considered to establish a threshold because not all parties with a higher number of violations, even within the same year, were listed.

⁸⁰ In addition, governments have, at times, denied the UN and other stakeholders access to engage with NSAGs on action plans, as was the case in Myanmar for many years. See: Human Rights Watch, “Burma: Failing to Demobilize Child Soldiers,” May 28, 2013, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2013/05/28/burma-failing-demobilize-child-soldiers> (accessed January 31, 2021).

Splitting of the List

Starting in 2017, when Secretary-General Guterres took up his post, the list has been split between Sections B and A, segregating those parties that have taken “positive measures to improve the protection of children” (Section B) from those that have not. However, parties who have continued to perpetrate violations, and even some who increased their violations, have ended up in Section B. It is unclear what constitutes “positive measures” or what criteria are used to determine a party’s placement in either Section A or B. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that listing a party in Section B, dedicated to parties that have taken positive measures, has yielded concrete improvements for children.

For example, Yemeni Government Forces were transferred from Section A to Section B in 2018, despite perpetrating four times more cases of recruitment and use than in the previous reporting period (105 cases, as compared with 26 cases).⁸¹ Between 2017 and 2019, the Saudi-led coalition consistently appeared in Section B of the annexes, suggesting it was taking measures to protect children and that these were yielding progress. Yet, in 2019, the UN found that the Saudi-led coalition was responsible for at least 729 child casualties in Yemen,⁸² an increase from 670 in 2018.⁸³

In Myanmar, the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) was transferred from Section A to Section B in 2018, despite perpetrating more cases of recruitment and use than in the previous year (seven cases reported in 2017,⁸⁴ as compared with 35 cases in 2018).⁸⁵

In all, 16 parties have been moved from Section A to Section B between 2018 and 2020. Four of the parties had pre-existing action plans, and three parties signed new action plans before their transfer from Section A to Section B. However, nine of the parties in Section B had no action plan in place.⁸⁶ Only one party was moved from Section B to Section A—the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N) in 2019—reportedly “owing to the lack of action in support of the action plan during 2018.”⁸⁷

Inconsistent Application of the Criteria for Delisting

Based on our assessment, recent decisions to delist parties from the reports’ annexes have not followed the clear criteria set out in the Secretary-General’s 2010 annual report, which specify that a party should be removed from the list only after full implementation of a UN action plan to end violations and UN-verified information that the party has ceased all violations for a period of at least one reporting cycle (i.e., one calendar year).⁸⁸

Our assessment reviewed 21 instances where parties were removed from the annexes between 2011 and 2020. In six of these instances, parties were delisted because they had ended violations and implemented action plans, in line with the Secretary-General’s 2010 criteria. In eight instances, parties were removed from the list because they had ceased to exist. In four of these instances, parties were removed from the list because they had

⁸¹ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/361-S/2017/821), 2017, para. 188; Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, para. 201.

⁸² Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907-S/2019/509), 2019, para. 191.

⁸³ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, para. 205.

⁸⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/361-S/2017/821), 2017, para. 124.

⁸⁵ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, para. 128.

⁸⁶ 16 parties were moved to Section B for at least some types of violations; some parties are listed in both Sections A and B, depending on the type of violation; for example, in the 2019 annual report, the South Sudan People’s Defence Forces (SSPDF) are listed in Section A for killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, and abductions, and in Section B for recruitment and use. Of the 16 aforementioned parties, three signed new action plans when they were moved from Section A to Section B, and four had pre-existing action plans when the change in listing was implemented.

⁸⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907-S/2019/509), 2019, para. 250.

⁸⁸ Parties to the conflict are also removed from the list if they cease to exist; for example, the FARC-EP were delisted in 2018, following the implementation of the peace agreement between the FARC-EP and the Government of Colombia in 2017 and the subsequent demobilization and transformation of the FARC-EP into a political party.

integrated into other armed forces or armed groups who continued to be listed. In the remaining three instances, parties were delisted in contravention of the criteria set out for delisting in the Secretary-General's 2010 annual report. These three cases, also discussed in the preceding section of this report on politicization, are the following:

- In 2018, the Saudi-led coalition was delisted for attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen, despite a documented 24 attacks in 2018.⁸⁹ It was not until March 2019 that the Saudi-led coalition signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the SRSF-CAAC, which provided a framework for the development of a workplan to enhance the protection of children in Yemen.⁹⁰ Irrespective of any protective measures taken, attacks continued in subsequent years, with 15 verified attacks on schools and hospitals in 2019 and four verified attacks in 2020.
- In 2020, the Saudi-led coalition was delisted for killing and maiming children in Yemen, despite being responsible for a documented 222 child casualties during the reporting period.⁹¹ With this delisting, the Saudi-led coalition has been removed from the Secretary-General's list altogether.
- In 2020, Myanmar's Tatmadaw Kyi was delisted for the recruitment and use of children.⁹² Although the Tatmadaw signed an action plan to end this violation in 2012 and has made progress, it has not succeeded in ending the practice nor in going a full reporting period without any violations, having committed over 200 documented cases in 2020.⁹³ In October 2020, after the Tatmadaw had been delisted for the recruitment and use of children, two boys were killed

after they were allegedly used as human shields by a Tatmadaw unit, in a widely-publicized incident over which the CTFMR expressed its grave concern.⁹⁴

Our assessment also suggests that government forces are given preference for delisting over NSAGs. For example, Nigeria's Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF), a NSAG, signed an action plan in 2017 and released at least 1,355 children in 2019. The UN has not verified any new cases of recruitment or use by the CJTF in 2019-2020, yet the armed group remained listed in 2020.⁹⁵

In summary, it appears that the delisting criteria were largely adhered to between 2011 and 2017, but in 2018 and again in 2020, parties were prematurely delisted for the violations specified above, in contravention of the existing criteria.

According to the Secretary-General's reports, the Saudi-led coalition and the Tatmadaw were delisted due to a "sustained significant decrease" in the number of violations they committed. However, this runs counter to the delisting criteria established in 2010 and the Security Council's stated expectations that listing is based on whether or not grave violations against children took place in violation of international obligations.

The current context of the COVID-19 pandemic further illustrates the danger of delisting parties based solely on a "decrease" in documented violations. Despite the best efforts of UN country teams, movement restrictions due to COVID-19 may well result in fewer verified violations for 2020, even in situations where actual violations may have remained steady or even increased. Such a "decrease" cannot be used as the basis for letting parties off the hook by delisting them.

⁸⁹ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/72/865-S/2018/465), 2018, para. 208.

⁹⁰ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/73/907-S/2019/509), 2019, para. 197.

⁹¹ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), 2020, para. 188.

⁹² The Tatmadaw was still listed for killing and maiming and for sexual violence in 2020.

⁹³ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), 2020, paras. 123-124.

⁹⁴ "CTFMR expresses grave concern over circumstances of two children killed in fighting between the Tatmadaw and Arakan Army in Buthidaung, Rakhine State," UN in Myanmar press release, October 14, 2020, <https://myanmar.un.org/en/95539-ctfmr-expresses-grave-concern-over-circumstances-two-children-killed-fighting-between> (accessed January 10, 2021).

⁹⁵ Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (A/74/845-S/2020/525), 2020, para. 207.

Conclusion



According to the Secretary-General's 2020 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, more than 24,000 grave violations against children were perpetrated in the previous year around the world. Children continue to be killed, maimed, recruited to fight in wars, and otherwise abused.

The Security Council has firmly placed the situation of children affected by armed conflict on its agenda and created a strong framework to monitor and respond to violations. Security Council Resolution 1379 in 2001 represented an important promise to children caught in war that violations against them would not go unnoticed and that the perpetrators of these violations would be held to account. Publicly naming perpetrators in a list appended to the Secretary-General's annual report—as requested by the Security Council—was to be a key step in ending violations and ensuring accountability.

As child rights experts who have been supportive of the CAAC agenda since its inception, we believe strongly in the agenda's ability to bring concrete improvements in the lives of children. However, based on our careful review of the evidence of violations documented in the Secretary-General's own reports in the past decade as well as the listing and delisting decisions contained therein, we are deeply concerned that the Secretary-General is not using the listing mechanism to hold all perpetrators accountable without fear or favor.

The findings of our assessment—including numerous discrepancies and omissions in listing decisions, as well as unwarranted delisting decisions—illustrate that the Security Council's carefully built framework to protect children from the horrors of war is being seriously undermined.

All relevant stakeholders—including the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the SRSG-CAAC, Member States, and civil society—have a vested interest in ensuring that the UN's CAAC agenda fulfills its promise and provides children with effective protection. Member States and all other stakeholders must rise above politics when it comes to the protection of children, who are among the most vulnerable in armed conflict.

We are concerned that unless the Secretary-General's list is restored as credible, objective, and evidence-based, one of the most effective means for protecting children and holding perpetrators accountable will be significantly and permanently weakened, thereby putting children at even greater risk.

Our recommendations for reform address the Secretary-General first and foremost, since he is ultimately responsible for listing and delisting decisions in the annual report, the subject of this assessment. However, we are also keenly aware that the whole UN system must come together in support of an unbiased approach to the protection of children in armed conflict and treat the issue as a much higher priority. This is a time for renewed leadership by all actors.

The UN's MRM produces an invaluable record of grave violations against children and provides the basis for dialogue and engagement with parties listed in the Secretary-General's report that can positively influence their attitudes, policies, and behavior, and lead to better protection of children in armed conflict. The significant investment that is channeled into producing this impressive body of documentation should be leveraged to ensure that both state and non-state parties end violations of children's rights. Such monitoring and reporting efforts should be further enhanced through increased funding, institutional prioritization, and stronger links to other aspects of the UN's international peace and security agenda.

We issue this assessment to express our unanimous and deep disappointment with the current approach to listing and delisting and to reiterate the urgent need to prioritize the protection of children. We welcome a dialogue with the Secretary-General and request a thorough response to the issues raised in this assessment. We urge him to commit to rectifying the issues we have identified and, going forward, to issuing a credible, accurate, complete, and evidence-based list of perpetrators. Only then can the list be restored as the powerful tool mandated by the Security Council to end grave violations against children in war.

Recommendations

The UN Secretary-General should:

- Hold all perpetrators of grave violations of children’s rights to the same standard regardless of whether they are government security forces, a coalition of governments, armed non-state actors, or peacekeepers, in line with Security Council Resolution 1379 and subsequent resolutions.
- In order to hold all parties to the same standard, ensure the annexes of his annual reports accurately and consistently reflect the evidence collected and verified by the UN’s MRM resulting in a credible, objective, and evidence-based list in 2021 and in the future. A credible list would follow the criteria set out in the 2010 annual report consistently and transparently.
- Ensure that delisting occurs only when the listed party to conflict—whether a state or non-state actor—meets the conditions outlined in the 2010 annual report of fully implementing an action plan and ceasing violations for a period of one year.
- End the distinctions between Sections A and B of the list and, instead, issue a unified list of all parties that have committed grave violations against children based on transparent and objective criteria.
- If a divided list is maintained, provide a clear rationale and criteria for the inclusion of parties in Section B, and detail in the narrative of the report the specifics of any positive measures undertaken by those parties. Under no circumstances should parties responsible for an increase in violations from one reporting period to the next remain in Section B.
- Clarify how the UN determines whether a party to conflict has engaged in a pattern of grave violations of children’s rights and ensure that such determinations are made according to consistent criteria going forward.
- As the basis for all listing decisions going forward, undertake a rigorous, systematic review of all MRM data regarding violations to ensure that the annexes to the annual report objectively and consistently reflect the evidence collected and verified by the MRM. Involve all relevant stakeholders in this technical review process, including the Office of the SRSR-CAAC, UNICEF, and other members of the UN Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict.
- Issue a thorough response to the issues raised in this assessment, and communicate to stakeholders, including Member States, UN entities, and civil society, what steps will be taken to avoid the disparities and inconsistencies seen in recent years’ reports.

The SRSG-CAAC should:

- Work actively with the Secretary-General to ensure that the list of perpetrators of grave violations against children in the 2021 annual report and in the future is credible, objective, and evidence-based and accurately and consistently reflects the evidence collected and verified by the MRM.
- Work closely with NGOs and local civil society, including by expanding engagement with NGOs at the field level, to improve collaboration, input, and reporting to help ensure all perpetrators who commit grave violations against children are listed in future annual reports.

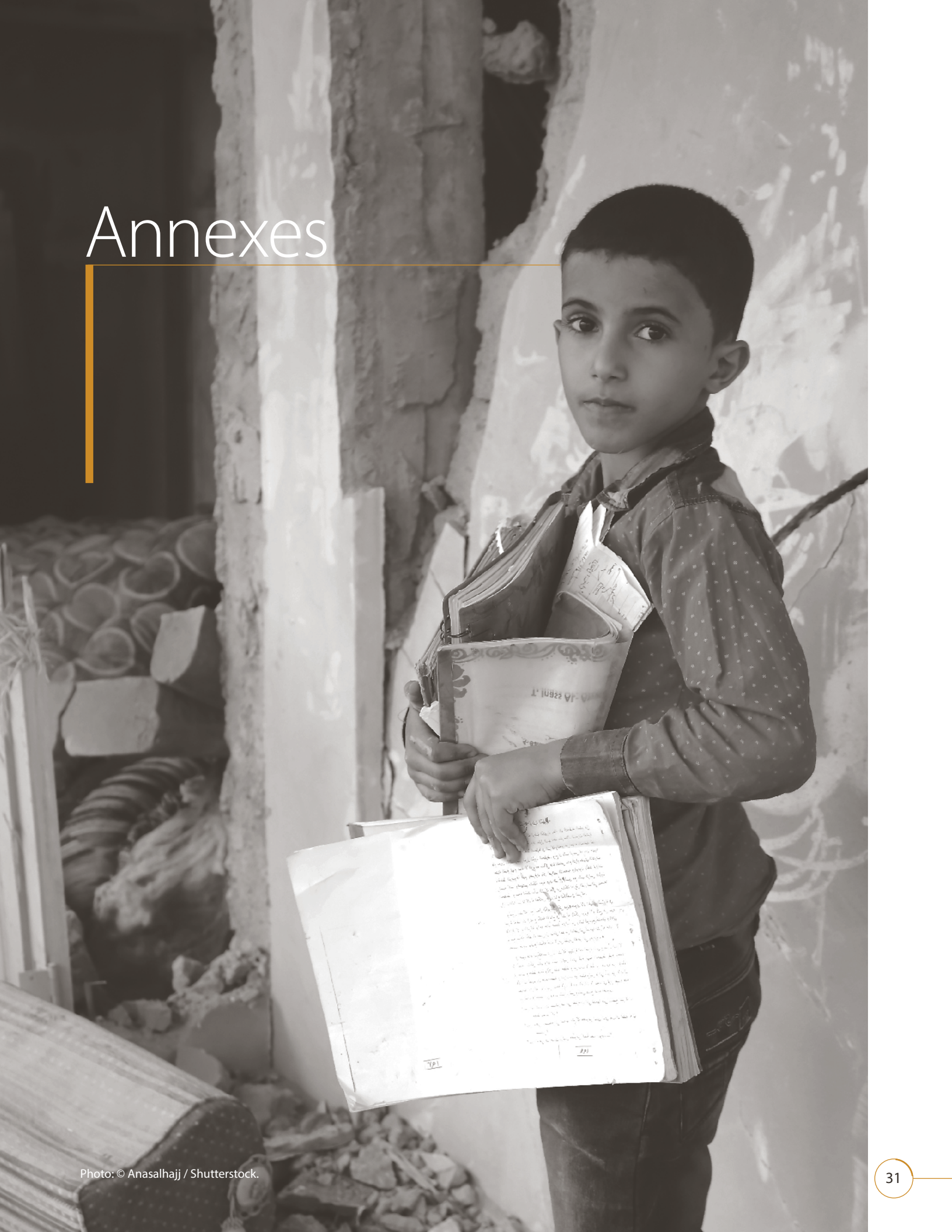
UNICEF and the UN Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict should:

- Actively support the Secretary-General and the SRSG-CAAC with technical advice and field analysis to ensure that the annexes to the report objectively and consistently list all perpetrators documented to have engaged in a pattern of violations of children's rights.

UN Member States, including members of the Security Council and of the Group of Friends on Children and Armed Conflict, and all those who support children in armed conflict, should:

- Press the Secretary-General to adopt these recommendations and ensure that the list in the 2021 report and in the future is credible, objective, and evidence-based, as outlined above.
- Request that the Secretary-General transparently report to the Security Council whether there have been any changes in the listing or delisting criteria or the way they are applied.
- Support the MRM to collect and verify information on violations as the basis for action.

Annexes



Annex I: Delisting of Parties to Conflict, 2010-2020

Country	Party to Conflict	State or NSAG	Delisted: Year	Violations it was delisted/removed for	Reason for delisting/removal
Myanmar	Karenni National People's Liberation Front (KNPLF)	NSAG	2011	Recruitment and use	Integrated into other group/s that continued to be listed
Myanmar	Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army	NSAG	2011	Recruitment and use	Integrated into other group/s that continued to be listed
Sri Lanka	Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP)	NSAG	2011	Recruitment and use	Complied with action plan
Nepal	Unified Communist Party of Nepal Maoist (UCPN-M)	NSAG	2011	Recruitment and use	Complied with action plan
DRC	Mai-Mai groups in North and South Kivu, including the Patriotes résistants congolais (PARECO)	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use; sexual violence	Integrated into other group/s that continued to be listed
CAR	Self-defense militias supported by the Government of the Central African Republic	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Sudan	Justice and Equality Movement/Peace Wing (JEM/Peace Wing)	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Sudan	Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)/Peace Wing	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Sudan	Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)/Free Will	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
CAR	Armée populaire pour la restauration de la république et la démocratie (APRD)	NSAG	2013	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
CAR	Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC)	NSAG	2014	Recruitment and use	Integrated into other group/s that continued to be listed
CAR	Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP)	NSAG	2014	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Chad	National Army of Chad	State	2014	Recruitment and use	Complied with action plan
Philippines	Moro Islamic Liberation Front	NSAG	2017	Recruitment and use	Complied with action plan
DRC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC)	State	2017	Recruitment and use*	Complied with action plan
Colombia	Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)	NSAG	2018	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Sudan	Government security forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, popular defence forces and national police forces	State	2018	Recruitment and use	Complied with action plan
Yemen	Saudi-led coalition	State	2018	Attacks on schools and hospitals	Delisted contrary to criteria
South Sudan	White Army	NSAG	2019	Recruitment and use	Ceased to exist
Yemen	Saudi-led coalition	State	2020	Killing and maiming	Delisted contrary to criteria
Myanmar	Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated Border Guard forces	State	2020	Recruitment and use*	Delisted contrary to criteria

* Remains listed for another violation as of 2020

Sources: Secretary-General's annual reports, 2010 to 2020; "Action Plans" page on the O/SRSG Website.

Annex 2: Violations by Listed Parties Vs. Non-Listed Parties

Recruitment and Use of Children

Each line represents the number of recruitment/use cases by one party to conflict in a specific year. Color shows whether or not the party was listed for the documented violations. Only includes instances where the number of cases is known. Instances with more than 500 recruitment/use cases were removed to provide more detail; the parties responsible for them were all listed. Violations by unidentified perpetrators were excluded.

Source: Secretary-General's Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2010-2020

From 2010 to 2020, there were **77 instances** in which **10 or more violations** by a party to the conflict were documented, yet the party was not listed.



For further information on the thresholds used in the sidebar, please see the Methodology section.

Killing and Maiming of Children

Each line represents the number of killing/maiming cases by one party to conflict in a specific year. Color shows whether or not the party was listed for the documented violations. Only includes instances where the number of cases is known. Instances with more than 1,000 killing/maiming cases were removed to provide more detail; the parties responsible for them were all listed. Violations by unidentified perpetrators were excluded.

Source: Secretary-General's Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2010-2020

From 2010 to 2020, there were **78 instances** in which **20 or more violations** by a party to the conflict were documented, yet the party was not listed.



For further information on the thresholds used in the sidebar, please see the Methodology section.

Rape and Other Forms of Sexual Violence

Each line represents the number of cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence by one party to conflict in a specific year. Color shows whether or not the party was listed for the documented violations. Only includes instances where the number of cases is known. Instances with more than 200 rape/sexual violence cases were removed to provide more detail; the parties responsible for them were all listed. Violations by unidentified perpetrators were excluded.

Source: Secretary-General's Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2010-2020

From 2010 to 2020, there were **61 instances** in which **10 or more violations** by a party to the conflict were documented, yet the party was not listed.



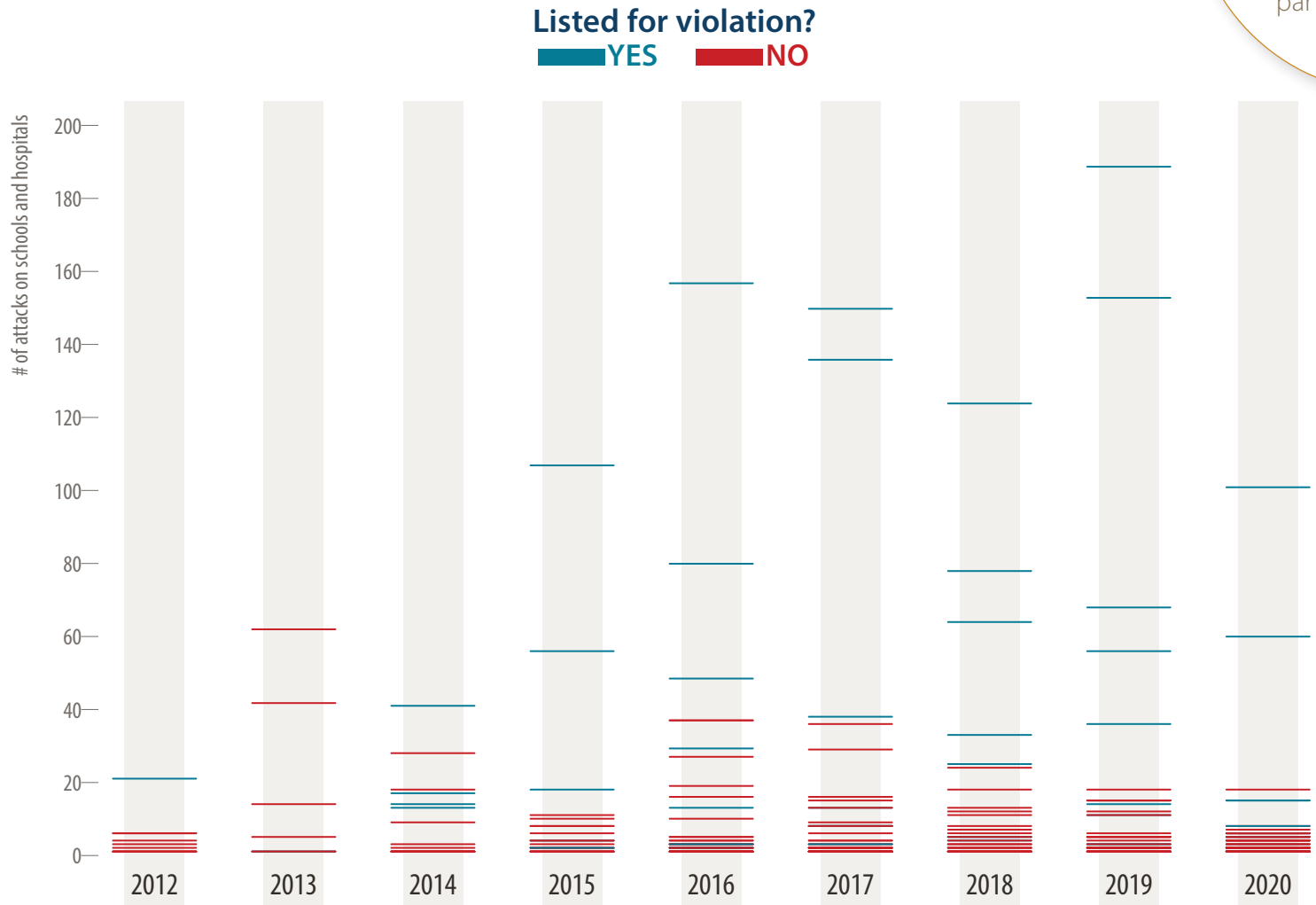
For further information on the thresholds used in the sidebar, please see the Methodology section.

Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

Each line represents the number of attacks on schools and hospitals by one party to conflict in a specific year. Color shows whether or not the party was listed for the documented violations. Only includes instances where the number of cases is known. Instances with more than 200 attacks on schools and hospitals were removed to provide more detail; the parties responsible for them were all listed. Violations by unidentified perpetrators were excluded. Parties were first listed for this violation in 2012.

Source: Secretary-General's Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2012-2020

From 2012 to 2020, there were **29 instances** in which **10 or more violations** by a party to the conflict were documented, yet the party was not listed.



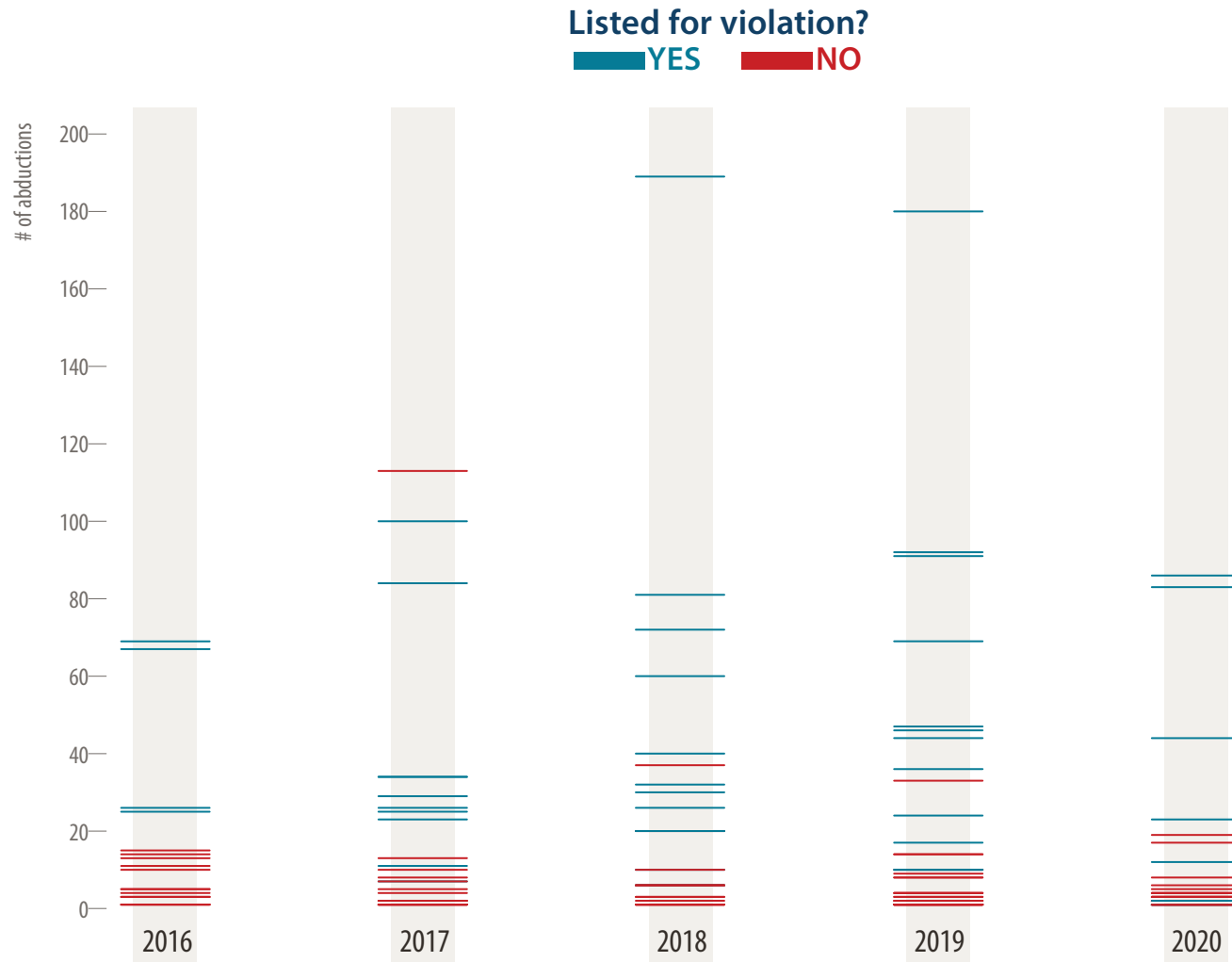
For further information on the thresholds used in the sidebar, please see the Methodology section.

Abduction of Children

Each line represents the number of abductions by one party to conflict in a specific year. Color shows whether or not the party was listed for the documented violations. Only includes instances where the number of cases is known. Instances with more than 200 abductions were removed to provide more detail; the parties responsible for them were all listed. Violations by unidentified perpetrators were excluded. Parties were first listed for this violation in 2016.

Source: Secretary-General's Annual Reports on Children and Armed Conflict, 2016-2020

From 2016 to 2020, there were **4 instances** in which **20 or more violations** by a party to the conflict were documented, yet the party was not listed.



For further information on the thresholds used in the sidebar, please see the Methodology section.

Eminent Persons Group