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SAUDI ARABIA-LED COALITION IN YEMEN COMMITTED 23 GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN LAST YEAR

- Save the Children and Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict detail attacks on children by Saudi Arabia-led coalition in 2016
- Call for UN Secretary-General to name coalition on annual child rights ‘list of shame’
- More than 4,000 children killed or maimed by all sides since conflict began



One-year-old Zuhoor was forced to have the fingers of her right hand amputated after being seriously injured by an airstrike near Sana'a

NEW YORK, July 20, 2017 – As the UN Secretary-General prepares to release his annual report on child rights violations in conflict, a [new briefing note](#) lays out the pattern of grave violations against children committed by the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen.

The briefing – by *Save the Children* and *Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict* – details a series of 23 attacks in 2016, each confirmed by independent international organisations.

In every case the coalition killed or maimed children, or bombed schools and hospitals.

They include a deadly airstrike on a funeral which killed more than 140 people; an attack on a crowded marketplace in which 25 children died; the bombing of a school for the blind; and multiple airstrikes on NGO medical facilities.

More than 4,000 children have been killed or injured by all sides in the conflict, including the coalition.

Save the Children and Watchlist are calling for the Saudi-led coalition to be added to a list of parties committing grave violations against children in armed conflict – popularly called the ‘list of shame’ – in the UN Secretary-General’s annual report on children and armed conflict.

The list is expected to be published in August; the previous report already names all other parties to Yemen’s conflict.

Stigma attached to the list acts as an international ‘naming and shaming’ process. To date, it has compelled 27 parties to conflict from across the world to sign action plans with the UN to end and prevent violations against children.

In some cases, appearing on the list can also lead to international tribunals and sanctions – including arms embargoes.

The Saudi-led coalition was [briefly named](#) on last year’s list for violations in 2015, but was removed following intensive lobbying by Saudi Arabia and [reported](#) threats by its supporters to withdraw funding from the UN.

The 23 attacks in 2016 detailed in the report include:

- **January** – an attack on a school for the blind in Sana’a and an airstrike that hit an MSF-supported hospital in Saada governorate.
- **February** – an attack on a market in Hajjah in February killed 25 children and injured four. Multiple strikes hit the market as families were shopping, leaving burned corpses scattered.
- **August** – 10 were children killed when their school was hit in Saada governorate in August 2016.
- **October** – an airstrike on a funeral led to the deaths of least 140 people and wounded about 600 in Sana’a, with children among the dead. The intensity of the bombing and brutality of the impact meant many victims could not be identified.

Tamer Kirolos, Save the Children’s Yemen country director, said:

“Everywhere you go in Yemen you see the devastation caused by airstrikes. Just last week, two children were brought into a hospital we support with serious injuries from a cluster bomb attack. One child was killed. Bombs are destroying schools, homes and lives. All parties have been responsible for the unnecessary deaths of children in Yemen, and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition is among them. The UN Secretary-General must put the interests of children first – and hold all of those responsible to account.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- States or groups can be listed in the UN Secretary-General's [annual report](#) for any of five 'grave violations' in the previous year: killing and maiming children, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, child recruitment, and rape and other forms of sexual violence.
- Save the Children and Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict have [previously detailed](#) more than 160 attacks on medical facilities and personnel by parties to the conflict in Yemen over the past two years.
- According to [OHCHR](#), between March 2015 and June 2017, **4,971 civilians were killed and 8,533 were injured**, totaling 13,504 civilian casualties.
- According to UNICEF's latest Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) figures, between March 26, 2015 and March 31, 2017, at least **1,595 children were killed and 2,542 others maimed**. There were also 1,657 verified incidents of military recruitment and use of children, and 216 verified attacks on schools and 98 on hospitals. Additionally, 237 cases of abduction and arbitrary detention of boys have been verified. These cases are considered to be the "tip of the iceberg."
- In 2016, five parties to Yemen's conflict were listed: the Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah; Al Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula/Ansar al Shariah; government forces, including the Yemeni Armed Forces, Military Police and others; pro-government militias; and the Saudi-led coalition before being removed.

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