

## Policy Note

April 2020

# “A Credible List”:

## Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2020 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict

The UN Secretary-General has presented an annual report on the situation of children affected by armed conflict (‘annual report’) to the UN General Assembly since 1998 and to the Security Council since 2000. The main purpose of the report has been to draw the attention of UN Member States to grave violations against children and the perpetrators. With its Resolution 1379 (2001) and subsequent resolutions on children and armed conflict, the Security Council mandated the Secretary-General to include in his annual reports a list of parties to armed conflict that commit the following grave violations against children: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions.

The listing mechanism has served as an important tool for the protection of children in armed conflict. It provides a key first step towards accountability by clearly identifying warring parties responsible for violating children’s rights in armed conflict. The mechanism also serves as a foundation for the United Nations to dialogue with warring parties, secure concrete commitments to end and prevent violations through UN action plans, and create tangible, positive changes for children affected by war.

In recent years, however, the process for determining which perpetrators are included in the report’s annexes has become increasingly politicized, threatening to undermine the report’s credibility and weaken its strength as a tool for promoting accountability and compliance with applicable international law.



### About Watchlist

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict strives to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national, and international nongovernmental organizations, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a fiscally sponsored program of United Charitable, a not-for-profit organization.

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In 2016, following intense political pressure from Saudi Arabia, then-Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon removed the Saudi-led coalition from his list for killing and maiming children in Yemen.<sup>1</sup> In 2017, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres included the Saudi-led coalition on his list, but placed it in a new category for those that had supposedly put in place measures to protect children.<sup>2</sup> In 2018, he again listed the coalition for killing and maiming children, but ‘delisted’ it for attacks on schools and hospitals, despite the fact that it continued to be responsible for a significant portion of attacks in both 2017 and 2018.<sup>3</sup> Other parties to conflict have been omitted from the list despite widespread and well-documented violations against children.

The failure to appropriately list *all* parties responsible for committing grave violations against children not only threatens to undermine the credibility of the annual report, but also undercuts efforts to hold perpetrators to account and UN Country Teams’ leverage to negotiate action plans to end violations.

Since 2017, the Secretary-General’s list has been split into two sections: parties that have enacted measures to protect children, and those that have not. However, there have been no clear criteria to explain any particular party’s placement. Civil society

organizations have warned that this division and lack of transparency undermine the list’s use as a tool to condemn and hold violators accountable.<sup>4</sup>

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict (‘Watchlist’) urges Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to publish a single, credible, and accurate list of perpetrators in his forthcoming 2020 annual report and to apply the same standards to *all* parties that violate children’s rights in armed conflict. In line with Article 100 of the UN Charter, the Secretary-General and his Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict (SRSG-CAAC) should not be influenced by any government or other authority, and each Member of the UN should respect the Secretary-General and the SRSG-CAAC’s responsibilities and refrain from seeking to influence them in the execution of these.<sup>5</sup> Watchlist also recommends a rigorous due diligence process by the Secretary-General to ensure that his list is evidence-based, accurately reflecting the findings of the UN’s Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) and the facts described in his report narrative.

This policy note provides Watchlist’s recommendations to the Secretary-General for warring parties that should be *added* to the annexes of his annual report and listings that should be *expanded* to include additional violations. In cases where parties have already been listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General’s 2019 report on children and armed conflict,<sup>6</sup> Watchlist has

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- 1 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 March 10, 2020).
  - 2 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 March 10, 2020).
  - 3 In 2017, the Saudi-led coalition was responsible for 24 out of 31, or 77 percent, of all UN-verified attacks on schools and hospitals. In 2018, the UN verified a total of 44 attacks on schools and hospitals, of which 15 were attributed to the coalition, 15 to the Houthis, and the remainder to other or unidentified parties; the Houthis continued to be listed for attacks on schools and hospitals, although the coalition was not. See: the Secretary-General’s 2018 and 2019 annual reports on children and armed conflict, available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/virtual-library/>.
  - 4 Watchlist, et al., “Open Letter Calling for a Complete and Accurate List of Perpetrators,” May 24, 2019, <https://watchlist.org/publications/open-letter-calling-for-a-complete-and-accurate-list-of-perpetrators/> (accessed March 16, 2020).
  - 5 Article 100 of the UN Charter states: “1. In the performance of their duties the Secretary-General and the staff shall not seek or receive instructions from any government or from any other authority external to the Organization. They shall refrain from any action which might reflect on their position as international officials responsible only to the Organization. 2. Each Member of the United Nations undertakes to respect the exclusively international character of the responsibilities of the Secretary-General and the staff and not to seek to influence them in the discharge of their responsibilities.” See: the Charter of the United Nations, available at <https://legal.un.org/repertory/art100.shtml>.
  - 6 See: 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 March 10, 2020).

not made recommendations. The policy note also calls for the inclusion of other situations of concern for children in armed conflict in the report's narrative.

## The Annual Report as Early Warning

In addition to publishing an annual list of parties that commit grave violations against children in armed conflict, the Secretary-General is also mandated to bring to the Security Council's attention 'other situations of concern.' These include situations that may not be on the Council's agenda, but where the broad and effective protection of children is of concern.

According to the UN's *MRM Field Manual*, 'other situations of concern' may be included in the narrative of the Secretary-General's annual report "due to insufficiency of verified information, or to the determination that current information does not satisfy the threshold<sup>7</sup> for inclusion of a party in the annexes."<sup>8</sup> Whereas the UN-led MRM is activated in a given country once one or more parties are listed, monitoring and reporting on child rights violations represents a core mandate and responsibility of the UN in *all* situations of concern. Furthermore, Article 99 of the UN Charter states that the Secretary-General "may bring to the attention of the Security Council any matter which in his opinion may threaten the maintenance of international peace and security."<sup>9</sup>

Since taking up his position in 2017, Secretary-General Guterres has emphasized conflict prevention as his top priority.<sup>10</sup> This includes "prioritizing early warning and early action on preventing violent conflict."<sup>11</sup> The abuse of children is symptomatic of more complex issues within society at large, such as the breakdown of institutions and security, and indeed, the recruitment and use of children as soldiers has been identified as an early warning indicator.<sup>12</sup> The narrative of the annual report provides an important platform for the Secretary-General to identify early warning signs and call the Security Council to action to protect children in armed conflict.

In line with the abovementioned provisions, Watchlist calls upon Secretary-General Guterres to make effective use of the narrative of his annual report by drawing the attention of the Security Council to other situations of concern for children affected by armed conflict.

## Methodology

Watchlist conducted a desk review of various publicly available reports for 16 relevant country situations for the period from January 1 to December 31, 2019, to inform its recommendations. These particular country situations were chosen based on the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict, focusing on those situations where parties were cited for grave violations in the narrative of the report but were not listed

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- 7 Security Council Resolution 1379 (2001) requests the Secretary-General to list parties "that recruit or use children in violation of the international obligations applicable to them." SCR 1882 (2009) requests the listing of parties "that engage, in contravention of applicable international law, in patterns of killing and maiming of children and/or rape and other sexual violence against children, in situations of armed conflict." SCR 1998 (2011) requests the listing of parties that engage in "in recurrent attacks on schools and/or hospitals," and SCR 2225 (2015) requests the Secretary-General to list parties that engage "in patterns of abduction of children in situations of armed conflict." Additional information on the criteria for listing is outlined in the Secretary-General's 2010 annual report on children and armed conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), pursuant to SCR 1882 (2009).
  - 8 OSRSG-CAAC, UNICEF, and DPKO, *Field Manual: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) on Grave Violations Against Children in Situations of Armed Conflict*, June 2014, [https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM\\_Field\\_5\\_June\\_2014.pdf](https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/MRM_Field_5_June_2014.pdf) (accessed March 4, 2020).
  - 9 Charter of the United Nations, <https://legal.un.org/repertory/art99.shtml> (accessed March 17, 2020).
  - 10 UN Security Council, 72nd year, 7857th meeting, UN Doc S/PV.7857, <https://undocs.org/en/S/PV.7857> (accessed March 16, 2020).
  - 11 UN Secretary-General, "Priorities: Prevention," website, <https://www.un.org/sg/en/priorities/prevention.shtml> (accessed March 16, 2020).
  - 12 See: Whitman, Shelly, and Sam Holland, "Working Paper: Understanding the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers as an Early Warning Indicator," The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative, June 2015, <https://www.childsoldiers.org/publications/understanding-the-recruitment-and-use-of-child-soldiers-as-an-early-warning-indicator/> (accessed March 16, 2020).

in the annexes. In addition to these, Watchlist reviewed information on grave violations for four country situations not currently included in the Secretary-General's annual reports: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Niger, and Ukraine.

Sources include the Secretary-General's previous annual reports on children and armed conflict; reports from UN agencies and offices, peacekeeping and special political missions, treaty bodies, and commissions of inquiry; Member States; and documentation by Watchlist's members and other reputable international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with relevant expertise. In some cases, Watchlist also analyzed credible news media sources. Its review focused on the five "trigger" violations: recruitment and use; killing and maiming; rape and other forms of sexual violence; attacks on schools and hospitals; and abductions.

Watchlist's method to arrive at a recommendation for listing is derived from the Security Council's relevant resolutions on children and armed conflict and the Secretary-General's previous annual reports.<sup>13</sup> To reach a standard threshold, Watchlist reviewed the Secretary-General's annexes from 2015 to 2019 and determined a minimum number of verified cases that triggered new listings for each violation. To determine if a party met this threshold and exhibited a pattern, Watchlist reviewed data from the Secretary-General's 2018 and 2019 annual reports. For example, for attacks on schools and hospitals, the minimum number of verified cases to trigger listing was nine, so Watchlist is recommending the listing of all parties responsible for nine or more verified such attacks. 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), Watchlist has recommended listings wherever the UN has verified at least five cases of recruitment and use.

For some parties mentioned in the body of the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report that have not yet been listed, Watchlist recommends that the

UN further investigate to determine whether they should be included in the 2020 report narrative and/or annexes. If investigation by the country team is not possible, the UN could do so by sending a delegation to the country to independently verify allegations, per the MRM's guidelines.

It should be noted that the information contained in this briefing note is not intended to serve as a complete list of all incidents perpetrated against children in all relevant situations during the reporting period. Rather, this policy note aims to *highlight specific incidents* to support Watchlist's recommendations to list certain parties, add additional violations to parties already listed, or to further investigate certain situations.

## Recommendations

On the basis of its review and bearing in mind the limitations described above, Watchlist recommends that the UN Secretary-General:

1. List the following parties that have committed grave violations against children in 2019 in the annexes of his upcoming annual report:
  - Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and pro-government militias, for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals in Afghanistan
  - United States-led international forces, for killing and maiming children in Afghanistan
  - Dissident groups of the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo* (FARC-EP), for recruitment and use of children in Colombia
  - Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) – pro-Machar, for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in South Sudan

<sup>13</sup> UN Security Council Resolutions 1379 (2001), para. 16; 1882 (2009), para. 3; 1998 (2011), para. 3; 2225 (2015), para. 3. See also: footnote 7.

- Government security forces, including the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and the Sudan Police Force, for killing and maiming children and rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in the Sudan
  - Russian government forces and Russian-backed Syrian air forces, for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals in Syria
  - Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition and allied militias, for attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen
  - Israeli forces, for killing and maiming children in Israel and the State of Palestine
2. Further investigate to determine whether parties should be listed in the annexes:
- ANDSF and pro-government militias, for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in Afghanistan
  - *Police Nationale Congolaise* (PNC), for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
  - Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition and allied militias, for recruitment and use of children in Yemen
  - Israeli forces, for attacks on schools and hospitals in Israel and the State of Palestine
  - Libyan National Army (LNA), including pro-Haftar militias and allied foreign forces, for killing and maiming children in Libya
3. Include in the narrative of the report as a "situation of concern" and further investigate which parties are responsible for committing grave violations, in order to determine whether parties should be listed in the annexes:
- Cameroon
  - The Sahel
  - Ukraine

## 2020 Annual Report Submission

# Annex I Countries

## Afghanistan

*The Afghan National Police (ANP), including the Afghan Local Police (ALP), are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on children and armed conflict for recruitment and use. Four armed groups (Haqqani Network, Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province – ISIL-KP, and Taliban forces and affiliated groups) are listed for recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children. Of these, ISIL-KP is also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals, and the Taliban for attacks on schools and hospitals and abductions. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to Afghanistan.*

### Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) and Pro-Government Militias<sup>14</sup>

#### Recommendation to List for Killing and Maiming

In 2018, the UN attributed at least 765 child casualties in Afghanistan to government and pro-government forces, including the ANDSF (629) – mainly the Afghan

National Army (467) – pro-government militias (56), joint operations of government and pro-government forces (58), and undetermined government and pro-government forces (22).<sup>15</sup> Yet the Secretary-General failed to list the ANDSF for killing and maiming children in his most recent annual report.

In 2019, the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) found that pro-government forces<sup>16</sup> were responsible for 1,032 child casualties (408 killed, 624 injured).<sup>17</sup> Of these, 341 child casualties (211 killed, 130 injured) occurred as a result of airstrikes by pro-government forces.<sup>18</sup>

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

In 2018, the UN verified a total of 20 attacks on schools and hospitals attributed to pro-government forces (12 attacks on schools, eight attacks on hospitals). Of these, 11 were attributed to the ANDSF, five to pro-government militias, three jointly to the ANDSF and armed groups, and one to an undetermined pro-government force.<sup>19</sup>

14 According to the Secretary-General's fourth report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Afghanistan, the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces is "an umbrella term describing all government security forces, including the Afghan National Army (and its subsidiaries the Afghan Air Force and Afghan Territorial Force), the Afghan Special Forces, the National Directorate for Security (the country's State intelligence service), the Afghan National Police, the Afghan Local Police, the Afghan National Civil Order Police and the Afghan Border Police." See: UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Afghanistan" (S/2019/727), September 10, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/727> (accessed March 18, 2020).

15 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 21.

16 UNAMA defines "Pro-Government Forces" as "Afghan National Security Forces and other forces and groups that act in military or paramilitary counter-insurgency operations and are directly or indirectly under the control of the Government of Afghanistan." UNAMA and OHCHR, "Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Annual Report 2019," February 2020, [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_annual\\_report\\_2019\\_-\\_22\\_february.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/afghanistan_protection_of_civilians_annual_report_2019_-_22_february.pdf) (accessed February 24, 2020), p. 91.

17 Ibid., p. 21.

18 Ibid., p. 23.

19 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), paras. 23-24.

In 2019, pro-government forces were found responsible for at least 21 attacks on schools and hospitals. UNAMA verified a total of nine incidents where pro-government forces (excluding international forces) caused damage to education facilities: Afghan National Army (four), National Directorate of Security (NDS) (three), and unknown or multiple pro-government forces (two).<sup>20</sup> The Mission recorded a total of 14 incidents in which pro-government forces (excluding international forces) caused damage to health care facilities; of these, six were attributed to the Afghan National Army, five to the NDS, one to the ANP, one to the ALP, and one jointly to various pro-government forces.<sup>21</sup>

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

In 2018, the UN verified four cases of sexual violence perpetrated by the ANP (three) and the ALP (one), affecting two boys and two girls; of these, the two boys were used as *bacha bazi*.<sup>22</sup> The UN continued to document the sexual abuse and exploitation of boys (*bacha bazi*) throughout 2019, despite the criminalization of the practice in Afghanistan’s revised Penal Code. According to UNAMA and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), such violations “are perpetrated mainly by the Afghan national security forces.”<sup>23</sup> Since the revisions of the Penal Code came into effect in February 2018, only one case of *bacha bazi* has been successfully prosecuted, according to UNAMA.<sup>24</sup>

Between January 1 and March 31, 2019, the UN’s Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting (CTFMR) verified two cases of sexual violence, affecting two boys, perpetrated by members of the ANP.<sup>25</sup> ALP and pro-government militia commanders also recruited and used a boy “for sexual purposes” during the April 1–June 30, 2019 reporting period.<sup>26</sup>

### **United States-Led International Forces Recommendation to List for Killing and Maiming**

The number of child casualties attributed to international forces led by the United States in Afghanistan has risen in recent years: from 55 in 2015, 87 in 2016, 96 in 2017, and 286 in 2018, to approximately 235 in 2019.<sup>27</sup> Yet Secretary-General Guterres has failed to list US-led international forces for killing and maiming children. In 2019, UNAMA found airstrikes by international forces accounted for more than two-thirds (69 percent) of the total 341 child casualties (211 killed, 130 injured) caused by pro-government airstrikes.<sup>28</sup>

In a March 10, 2019 incident documented by Human Rights Watch (HRW) and *The New York Times*, nine children were allegedly killed in the village of Nasir Khil, located approximately four kilometers north of the district center of Hisarak, in Nangarhar province.<sup>29</sup> According to HRW, a US-backed paramilitary force called in air support after it came under fire during search operations. International forces reportedly launched

20 UNAMA and OHCHR, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Annual Report 2019,” pp. 28, 107.

21 *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 108.

22 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict” (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 22.

23 UNAMA and OHCHR, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Annual Report 2019,” p. 9.

24 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

25 UN General Assembly, “Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security” (A/73/902-S/2019/493), June 14, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/493> (accessed February 22, 2020), para. 30.

26 UN General Assembly, “Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in Afghanistan and Its Implications for International Peace and Security” (A/74/348-S/2019/703), September 3, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/703> (accessed February 22, 2020), para. 33.

27 See: Secretary-General’s annual reports on children and armed conflict, 2016–2019, available at <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/virtual-library/>.

28 UNAMA and OHCHR, “Afghanistan Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Annual Report 2019,” p. 23.

29 Human Rights Watch, “*They’ve Shot Many Like This*: Abusive Night Raids by CIA-Backed Afghan Strike Forces,” October 31, 2019, [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report\\_pdf/afghanistan1019\\_web.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/afghanistan1019_web.pdf) (accessed February 24, 2020), p. 34; Ghazi, Zabihullah and Fahim Abed, “13 Civilians Reported Killed in U.S. Airstrikes in Afghanistan,” *The New York Times*, March 10, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/10/world/asia/airstrikes-nangarhar-afghanistan.html> (accessed February 24, 2020).

airstrikes that hit two houses, killing five teenage girls in one house, and three teenage girls and a boy in the other. A spokesperson for the NATO mission confirmed the airstrikes but did not immediately address the reports of civilian casualties, stating only that the Resolute Support coalition was “looking into” the matter.

In another incident verified by UNAMA, on September 22, 2019, US force airstrikes that were allegedly targeting Al-Qaeda and Taliban positions struck two vehicles returning from a wedding in Helmand’s Musa Qala district, killing at least nine children and injuring at least six.<sup>30</sup> According to UNAMA, President Ghani asked the governor of Helmand to investigate the matter, while USFOR-A initiated its own investigation under US Army Regulation 15-6.<sup>31</sup>

## Central African Republic (CAR)

*The former Séléka coalition and associated armed groups, including the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique; the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique as part of the ex-Séléka coalition; local defense militias known as the anti-balaka; and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) are listed in the Secretary-General’s most recent annual report for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms of sexual violence. The LRA is also listed for abductions, and the former Séléka coalition and associated groups are also listed for attacks on schools and hospitals.*

## Colombia

*The Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) is currently listed for the recruitment and use of children in Colombia. Watchlist recommends the following listing in the Secretary-General’s 2020 annual report on children and armed conflict.*

### Dissident Groups of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP)

#### Recommendation to List for Recruitment and Use

According to the Secretary-General’s December 2019 report on *Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia*, dissident FARC-EP groups were responsible for 82 verified incidents of recruitment and use of children in 2018, as well as nine verified incidents between January and June 2019.<sup>32</sup>

The recruitment of children as young as 12 years old by FARC-EP dissident groups was also documented by HRW in Colombia’s Arauca Province, as well as Venezuela’s Apure State.<sup>33</sup> FARC-EP groups also continued to recruit children in Cauca, Guaviare, Meta, Nariño, and Putumayo.<sup>34</sup> HRW found that of 16 FARC-EP members who handed themselves over to State forces in July 2019, six were under the age of 18.<sup>35</sup>

Several sources, including a regional attorney-general in Colombia and the UN, confirmed the presence of recruited children in a FARC-EP dissident group’s

30 UNAMA, “Quarterly Report on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: 1 January to 30 September 2019,” [https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama\\_protection\\_of\\_civilians\\_in\\_armed\\_conflict\\_-\\_3rd\\_quarter\\_update\\_2019.pdf](https://unama.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/unama_protection_of_civilians_in_armed_conflict_-_3rd_quarter_update_2019.pdf) (accessed February 24, 2020), p. 9.

31 *Ibid.*, p. 9.

32 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict in Colombia” (S/2019/1017), December 31, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/1017> (accessed February 12, 2020), para. 20.

33 HRW, “*The Guerrillas Are the Police*”: Social Control and Abuses by Armed Groups in Colombia’s Arauca Province and Venezuela’s Apure State, January 22, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/01/22/guerrillas-are-police/social-control-and-abuses-armed-groups-colombias-arauca> (accessed February 12, 2020), p. 17.

34 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia” (S/2019/265), March 26, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/265> (accessed March 5, 2020), para. 78.

35 HRW, “*The Guerrillas Are the Police*”: Social Control and Abuses by Armed Groups in Colombia’s Arauca Province and Venezuela’s Apure State, p. 19.

camp, located in San Vicente del Caguán, Caquetá. At least seven of these children were killed when a government airstrike hit the camp in late August 2019.<sup>36</sup>

## Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

*Fourteen Non-State Armed Groups (NSAGs) are listed for grave violations in the annexes of the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on children and armed conflict. Additionally, the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) are listed for rape and other forms of sexual violence against children. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to grave violations against children in the DRC.*

### Police Nationale Congolaise (PNC)

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

In 2018, the PNC perpetrated at least 51 cases of sexual violence against children – second in number only to the FARDC – yet it was not listed in the Secretary-General's previous annual report.<sup>37</sup>

The UN verified 56 cases conflict-related sexual violence against children between April and June 2019. Of the total incidents recorded during this period – which

included an additional 242 adult victims – 41 percent were attributed to State actors, including the PNC.<sup>38</sup> In its June 2019 concluding conclusions on the second periodic report of the DRC, the UN Committee Against Torture expressed concern about sexual violence against children, noting that the PNC were among perpetrators.<sup>39</sup>

Some 70 girls were survivors of various forms of conflict-related sexual violence between June 29 and September 25, 2019.<sup>40</sup> Of the total documented cases of sexual violence – which included at least 301 adult victims<sup>41</sup> – 28 percent were perpetrated by State actors, including the PNC.<sup>42</sup> As of August 2019, sexual violence against women and girls remained pervasive in the Kasai region, where the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that documented rape cases continued to be perpetrated primarily by State security forces, including the police.<sup>43</sup>

## Iraq

*The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is listed in the Secretary-General's most recent annual report for all five "trigger" violations, while the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) are listed for recruitment and use.*

36 Noticias Caracol, "Personería denunció reclutamiento forzado de niños antes del bombardeo a disidencias de las FARC," November 6, 2019, <https://noticias.caracol.com/colombia/personeria-denuncio-reclutamiento-forzado-de-ninos-antes-del-bombardeo-disidencias-de-las-farc> (accessed January 27, 2020); Publimetro Colombia, "Ejército mató a siete niños en bombardeo en agosto y los presentó como guerrilleros," November 5, 2019, <https://www.publimetro.co/co/noticias/2019/11/05/ejercito-mato-siete-ninos-bombardeo-agosto-los-presento-guerrilleros.html> (accessed January 27, 2020); UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Verification Mission in Colombia" (S/2019/988), December 26, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/988> (accessed March 5, 2020), para. 12.

37 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 61.

38 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Region" (S/2019/783), October 1, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/783> (accessed February 13, 2020), para. 29.

39 UN Committee against Torture, "Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (CAT/C/COD/CO/2), June 3, 2019, [https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/COD/CO/2&Lang=En](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CAT/C/COD/CO/2&Lang=En) (accessed February 13, 2020), para. 32.

40 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (S/2019/776), September 27, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/776> (accessed March 4, 2020), para. 59.

41 *Ibid.*, para. 59.

42 *Ibid.*, para. 60.

43 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Human Rights Situation and the Activities of the United Nations Joint Human Rights Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo" (A/HRC/42/32), August 14, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/32> (accessed March 5, 2020), para. 52.

## Mali

The NSAGs *Ansar Eddine*, *Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest*, and *Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad* are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict for recruitment and use and rape and other forms of sexual violence. Platform, including affiliated groups, is listed for recruitment and use.

## Myanmar

The *Tatmadaw Kyi*, including integrated Border Guard forces, is currently listed for recruitment and use of children, killing and maiming children, and rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in Myanmar. Seven armed groups are listed for recruitment and use: the *Karen National Liberation Army*; the *United Wa State Army*; the *Democratic Karen Benevolent Army*; the *Kachin Independence Army*; the *Karenni Army*; the *Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council*; and the *Shan State Army*.

## Somalia

In his most recent annual report on children and armed conflict, the Secretary-General lists *Al-Shabaab* for all five "trigger" violations, *Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ)* for recruitment and use, and the *Somali National Army* for recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children.

## South Sudan

The *South Sudan People's Defense Forces (SSPDF)*, including *Taban Deng*-allied *SSPDF*, are the only government forces listed for all five "trigger" violations. The *Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition – pro-Machar (pro-Machar SPLA-IO)* is

currently listed for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abductions. Watchlist recommends the following addition to the Secretary-General's 'list of shame' in 2020.

## Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) – pro-Machar

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

According to the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict, the pro-Machar SPLA-IO was responsible for perpetrating sexual violence against 14 girls in 2018.<sup>44</sup> Yet Secretary-General Guterres failed to list the pro-Machar SPLA-IO for sexual violence.

Despite significant underreporting of sexual violence in South Sudan, evidence suggests the pro-Machar SPLA-IO continued to perpetrate such violations in 2019. In January 2020, the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan reported that it had gathered information on allegations of sexual slavery and the rape of women and girls being unlawfully held in a pro-Machar SPLA-IO military base in Western Equatoria's capital city, Yambio, throughout the first half of 2019.<sup>45</sup>

According to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict (SRSG-SVC) Pramila Patten, at least 50 children were held in military bases in South Sudan throughout the entirety of 2019, after being abducted by pro-Machar SPLA-IO forces between April and August 2018. While being detained, many of these children – who were among more than 500 women and children abducted during the five-month period – were "subjected to systematic and brutal forms of conflict-related sexual violence," including "repeated rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage by members of the SPLA-IO RM [pro-Machar SPLA-IO]."<sup>46</sup>

44 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 154.

45 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan" (A/HRC/43/56), January 31, 2020, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoHSouthSudan/Pages/Index.aspx> (accessed March 4, 2020), para. 61.

46 Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict, "Special Representative Patten Welcomes the Release of Abducted Women and Children from Military Bases in South Sudan," press release, February 4, 2020, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/press-release/special-representative-patten-welcomes-the-release-of-abducted-women-and-children-from-military-bases-in-south-sudan/> (accessed March 4, 2020).

## Sudan

*Four NSAGs are listed for recruitment and use of children in the annexes of the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report: Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW), Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA-MM), and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). Watchlist recommends the following additions to the Secretary-General's 2020 annual report.*

### Government Security Forces, including the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF), and the Sudan Police Force

#### Recommendation to List for Killing and Maiming

Despite notable progress on child protection, leading to the delisting of government security forces for recruitment and use of children, grave violations against children have continued in the Sudan, mainly perpetrated by government forces.<sup>47</sup> In 2018, the UN attributed 98 child casualties, or 52 percent of all verified cases, to government security forces; these include the RSF (33), SAF (57), and the Sudan Police Force (eight), often occurring in the context of military operations in the Jebel Marra area of West Darfur State.<sup>48</sup> However, the Secretary-General failed to list Sudanese government forces for killing and maiming in his 2019 annual report.

The Panel of Experts on the Sudan documented an attack launched by State security forces against civilians near North Darfur's Saraf Omra locality on November 7, 2019.

Citing local sources, the Panel of Experts reported that the government forces' indiscriminate shooting of civilian homes resulted in the injury and hospitalization of six boys, all of whom were between the ages of 13 and 15.<sup>49</sup>

Between December 2018 and mid-2019, government security forces violently cracked down on civilian protesters, including children. In June alone, government forces killed over 130 protesters, including at least 19 children, and injured at least 49 children.<sup>50</sup> On July 29, 2019, the RSF shot and killed at least five children, aged 15 to 17 years old, at a protest in El-Obeid, the capital of North Kordofan State.<sup>51</sup>

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

In 2018, the UN attributed 39 verified cases of sexual violence against children to government security forces, including the RSF (20), SAF (17), the Sudan Police Force (one), and the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) (one).<sup>52</sup> Yet government security forces were not listed in the Secretary-General's 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict.

Cases of conflict-related sexual violence reportedly increased in the Jebel Marra area during the first half of 2019, and, according to a special report of the AU Commission Chairperson and the UN Secretary-General, the majority of incidents were perpetrated by government and affiliated forces, including the RSF.<sup>53</sup> Members of government security forces, including the

47 UN Security Council, "Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Strategic Assessment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur" (S/2019/445), May 30, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/445> (accessed February 18, 2020), para. 24.

48 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 163.

49 UN Security Council, "Letter Dated 14 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council" (S/2020/36), January 14, 2020, <https://www.undocs.org/en/S/2020/36> (accessed February 18, 2020), para. 118.

50 UNICEF, "Children Killed, Injured, Detained and Abused Amid Escalating Violence and Unrest in Sudan," statement by UNICEF Executive Director, June 11, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/children-killed-injured-detained-and-abused-amid-escalating-violence-and-unrest> (accessed March 15, 2020).

51 UNICEF, "No Child Should Be Buried in Their School Uniform," statement by UNICEF Representative in Sudan, July 29, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/no-child-should-be-buried-their-school-uniform> (accessed March 15, 2019).

52 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 164.

53 UN Security Council, "Special Report of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission and the Secretary-General of the United Nations on the Strategic Assessment of the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur" (S/2019/445), para. 22.

RSF and SAF, were identified as perpetrators in over 30 percent of the sexual violence cases documented between July 14, 2018 and May 15, 2019.<sup>54</sup>

Between January 4 and April 3, 2019, the UN-African Union Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) documented the rape of four internally displaced girls by two Sudanese police personnel. Among the survivors was a 15-year-old girl residing in the Kasab displacement camp, located near the town of Kutum in North Darfur, in the greater Jebel Marra area.<sup>55</sup>

In its January 2020 report, the Panel of Experts on the Sudan detailed human rights abuses perpetrated by the Sudanese government during the March-December 2019 reporting period, including the rape of two girls – aged 11 and 13 – by members of the RSF.<sup>56</sup> The report references a video recording disseminated by local activists, in which the two girls narrate their accounts. According to their testimony and subsequent documentation, the rapes were perpetrated in the town of Nertiti in Central Darfur State by individuals wearing RSF uniforms and insignia. Both survivors were reportedly injured and hospitalized as a result.

## Syria

*Government forces, including the National Defense Forces and pro-government militias, are listed in the Secretary-General's most recent annual report for recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals. Ahrar al-Sham and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham led by Nusrah Front (Levant Liberation Organization) are listed for recruitment and use and killing and maiming of children,*

*while groups self-affiliated with the Free Syrian Army, the Army of Islam, and the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) are listed for recruitment and use. The Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) is listed for all five "trigger" violations. Watchlist recommends the following additions to the 'list of shame' in 2020.*

## Russian Government Forces and Russian-Backed Syrian Air Forces

### Recommendation to List for Killing and Maiming

The Russian Aerospace Forces entered the Syrian armed conflict in September 2015 and have long been suspected of being behind airstrikes that have indiscriminately targeted civilians, including attacks on schools and hospitals. Still, direct evidence of Russia's involvement was difficult to find, and the government of Russia has denied responsibility. In 2019, however, groundbreaking investigations by *The New York Times*,<sup>57</sup> including analysis of audio recordings between Russian air force pilots and ground control officers in Syria, found evidence of Russia's responsibility for airstrikes; these findings were further substantiated by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Syria (CoI on Syria) and independent NGOs such as HRW and Physicians for Human Rights.

In late April 2019, aerial bombardments throughout the demilitarized zone of Idlib and Western Aleppo governorate escalated significantly, as Russian and Syrian warplanes targeted areas there, leading to the killing and maiming of scores of children.

Several airstrikes were carried out in multiple areas of Idlib city on March 13, 2019, reportedly killing seven children (five boys, two girls).<sup>58</sup> On March 22, 2019,

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., para. 23.

<sup>55</sup> UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the African Union-United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur" (S/2019/305), April 10, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/305> (accessed February 18, 2020), para. 35.

<sup>56</sup> UN Security Council, "Letter Dated 14 January 2020 from the Panel of Experts on the Sudan Addressed to the President of the Security Council" (S/2020/36), para. 116.

<sup>57</sup> Triebert, Christian, et al., "How Times Reporters Proved Russia Bombed Syrian Hospitals," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/reader-center/russia-syria-hospitals-investigation.html> (accessed March 30, 2020).

<sup>58</sup> UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/321), April 16, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/321> (accessed February 25, 2020), Annex, p. 16.

Russian airstrikes allegedly resulted in the death of six children (five boys, one girl) in the villages of Kafraya and Fu'ah in central Idlib.<sup>59</sup> On April 14, 2019, in the city of Ariha (southern Idlib), pro-government airstrikes reportedly injured five children.<sup>60</sup>

HRW reported that between April 26 and June 3, 2019, the Syrian-Russian military alliance carried out "hundreds of attacks" every day across areas in the Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo governorates, killing at least 20 children. According to HRW, these attacks involved the use of banned cluster munitions and incendiary weapons, as well as large, air-dropped explosive weapons with indiscriminate, "wide-area effects," including barrel bombs.<sup>61</sup> HRW determined the involvement of the Syrian-Russian military alliance based on the munitions, delivery systems, and target areas.<sup>62</sup>

As HRW and other sources have pointed out, with the exception of two US-led strikes limited in scope, Russian and Syrian government forces were the only countries known to be operating aircraft in Idlib during the period in which these attacks and consequent casualties occurred.<sup>63</sup>

OHCHR<sup>64</sup> documented at least 28 child casualties (27 killed, one injured) in Idlib governorate throughout the month of May, several of which are further corroborated by data compiled by ACLED<sup>65</sup>:

- Reportedly, two boys were killed, and one boy was injured on May 6 as a result of air- and ground-based strikes that hit the village of Rub'a al-Joz in a rural region of Khan Shaykhun.
- Two children were allegedly killed as a result of airstrikes in the southern town of Ma'arrat Sin on May 10.
- On May 19, four children (three boys, one girl) were among ten civilians killed as a result of alleged airstrikes on the town of Kafr Nubl.
- Four children (two boys, two girls) were among at least 12 civilians killed as a result of alleged airstrikes that hit the city of Ariha on May 27.
- On May 28, five children (three boys, two girls) were reportedly among seven civilians killed as a result of alleged airstrikes on the town of Ihsim in southern rural Idlib.
- Three children (two boys, one girl) were reportedly among five civilians killed in alleged airstrikes on the city of Ma'arrat al-Nu'man on May 30.

Between April and May 2019, OHCHR documented airstrikes that killed two children (one boy, one girl) and injured two children (one boy, one girl) in Hama governorate,<sup>66</sup> as well as airstrikes that killed three children in western Aleppo.<sup>67</sup> Between

59 Ibid., Annex, p. 16. See also: Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), <https://www.acleddata.com> (accessed March 13, 2020).

60 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/508), June 19, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/508> (accessed February 25, 2020), Annex, p. 17.

61 HRW, "Russia/Syria: Flurry of Prohibited Weapons Attacks," press release, June 3, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/06/03/russia/syria-flurry-prohibited-weapons-attacks> (accessed February 26, 2020).

62 Ibid.

63 Ibid.

64 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/508), Annex, pp. 19-20.

65 ACLED, <https://www.acleddata.com> (accessed March 13, 2020).

66 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/508), Annex, p. 19.

67 Ibid., Annex, p. 21.

June 1 and July 31, 2019, OHCHR recorded 55 child deaths and at least two injuries as a result of airstrikes conducted in Idlib governorate.<sup>68</sup>

In a statement, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that at least 26 children had been killed as a result of airstrikes carried out in Idlib and Aleppo in just 10 days (July 16-26, 2019).<sup>69</sup> These incidents include a series of aerial bombardments carried out in multiple locations (Ariha, Muhabal, and Tabish) across southern Idlib on July 24, 2019, that killed three children from the same family and injured an unspecified number of others.<sup>70</sup> Save the Children and the Hurras Network also reported that at least 33 children were killed between June 24 and July 24, 2019 – surpassing the total of 31 children killed during all of 2018.<sup>71</sup>

After a brief lull in aerial bombardments between August 2 and 4, 2019, due to a conditional ceasefire, airstrikes resumed on August 5. According to OHCHR, at least 39 children were killed as a result of Syrian government and pro-government airstrikes in Idlib governorate between August 1 and September 22, 2019.<sup>72</sup>

Despite a ceasefire announced by the governments of Russia and Syria on August 30, 2019, applicable to Idlib governorate, active hostilities escalated between October 1 and November 30, 2019, particularly in southern Idlib, northern Hama, eastern Latakia, and western Aleppo.<sup>73</sup> Of the 48 child deaths that OHCHR documented during this period, at least 11 were attributed to Syrian government and pro-government airstrikes, which also injured at least four children.<sup>74</sup>

Violence in northwest Syria escalated sharply in the last month of 2019, as Syrian government and pro-government forces intensified aerial bombardments inside the geographical areas that fall within the de-escalation zone and on surrounding towns and villages,<sup>75</sup> specifically in Ma'arrat al-Nu'man and Saraqib in southern Idlib.<sup>76</sup> OHCHR documented incidents in which at least 13 children were killed as a result of airstrikes in Idlib governorate in December 2019.<sup>77</sup>

### **Recommendation to List for Attacks on Schools and Hospitals**

Between early March and mid-May 2019, the Syrian-Russian air offensive had reportedly struck at least 16 schools and 15 health facilities, according to the

68 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/674), August 21, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/674> (accessed February 27, 2020), Annex, pp. 16-18.

69 OHCHR, "Increasing Airstrike Casualties in Syria Being Ignored – Bachelet," press release, July 26, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24851&LangID=E> (accessed February 28, 2020).

70 Ibid.

71 Save the Children, "More Children Killed in Idlib in Last Four Weeks Than All of 2018," press release, July 24, 2019, <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/about-us/media-and-news/2019-press-releases/more-children-killed-in-idlib> (accessed February 28, 2020).

72 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/820), October 15, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/820> (accessed February 28, 2020).

73 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/949), December 16, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/949> (accessed February 29, 2020), para. 8.

74 Ibid., para. 15, Annex, pp. 16-17.

75 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018) and 2504 (2020)" (S/2020/141), February 21, 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/141> (accessed February 29, 2020), para. 3.

76 OCHA, "Syrian Arab Republic: Recent Developments in Northwest Syria, Situation Report No. 1," December 23, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/nw\\_syria\\_sitrep1\\_20191223.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/nw_syria_sitrep1_20191223.pdf) (accessed February 29, 2020), p. 1.

77 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018), 2449 (2018) and 2504 (2020)" (S/2020/141), Annex, p. 16.

Col on Syria.<sup>78</sup> With the exception of two reported US strikes that were limited in scope, the vast majority of airstrikes during this period were conducted by Russian or Syrian government forces, as noted above. Additional evidence from independent investigations suggest Russian air forces were either directly responsible or provided supported for such attacks.

HRW investigations found that Russia provided military and political support to the Syrian government "as it bombed over 20 health facilities out of service" between April 26 and June 3, 2019.<sup>79</sup>

Investigations by *The New York Times* found that Russian pilots bombed four hospitals in a 12-hour period in May.<sup>80</sup> The Col on Syria further corroborated these four incidents, attributing responsibility to "pro-government forces." In the first incident, an air attack conducted in Idlib's Ma'arrat al-Nu'man district reportedly destroyed a hospital in the town of Hass after five airstrikes were launched.<sup>81</sup> That afternoon, at approximately 5:30 p.m., pro-government forces struck Orient hospital in the district of Kafr Nubl three times, with three-to-five minutes elapsing between each strike. This hospital had served up to 500 patients per day, though the attacks rendered it "completely destroyed and inoperable."<sup>82</sup>

Also on May 5, pro-government forces launched airstrikes against al-Sham hospital in Kafr Nubl.<sup>83</sup> The Col on Syria stated in its August report that such attacks "strongly suggest that pro-government forces systematically targeted medical facilities" throughout the January 11-July 10 reporting period, and that such attacks may amount to war crimes.<sup>84</sup> On November 6, 2019, Russian forces allegedly bombed the same hospital in Kafr Nubl, putting it out of service.<sup>85</sup>

Evidence suggests that Russian air forces or Russian-backed Syrian air forces also attacked schools in 2019. UNICEF verified 32 incidents affecting education facilities in northwest Syria in April and May 2019 alone, with pro-government forces responsible for the majority of these attacks.<sup>86</sup>

Syrian and Russian warplanes reportedly conducted a number of attacks targeting the town of Qal'at al-Madiq in Hama on April 28, 2019. In Shamali neighborhood, these strikes allegedly caused significant damage to the building of the education directorate, as well as three separate schools located in the same complex (Fawaz Haj Hussein primary school, Akram Ali secondary school, and Akram Ali high school).<sup>87</sup> Independent investigations by *The New York Times* further corroborated this incident. The Akram Ali secondary school's compound reportedly housed a maternity and

78 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic" (A/HRC/42/51), August 15, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/IICISyria/Pages/Documentation.aspx> (accessed February 25, 2020), para. 44.

79 HRW, "Russia/Syria: Flurry of Prohibited Weapons Attacks."

80 Hill, Evan and Christiaan Triebert, "12 Hours. 4 Syrian Hospitals Bombed. One Culprit: Russia," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2020, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/13/world/middleeast/russia-bombing-syrian-hospitals.html> (accessed March 25, 2020).

81 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic" (A/HRC/42/51), Annex II, para. 2.

82 Ibid., Annex II, para. 3.

83 Ibid., Annex II, para. 3.

84 Ibid., para. 52.

85 Triebert, Christiaan, et al., "We Proved Russian Pilots Bombed a Hospital. Then They Did It Again," *The New York Times*, multimedia, November 14, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/video/world/middleeast/10000006815692/syria-hospitals-russia.html> (accessed March 25, 2020).

86 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/508), Box 1, para. 2.

87 Ibid., para. 5(g).

children's hospital, which served around 8,000 people each month.<sup>88</sup> Russian airstrikes in the area reportedly forced the school and hospital to be abandoned.

During the April 28 operations on Qal'at al-Madiq, pro-government forces allegedly launched rockets that caused severe damage to the primary, secondary, and high schools in the village of Huwayz. All three schools were reportedly closed permanently as a result of the attack.<sup>89</sup>

## Yemen

*Government forces, including the Yemeni Armed Forces, are listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's most recent annual report for the recruitment and use of children, while the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen (the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, UAE) is listed for killing and maiming children in Yemen. Four NSAGs (the Houthis; Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula; pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees; and Security Belt Forces) are listed for recruiting and using children in their ranks. The Houthis are additionally listed for killing and maiming children and attacks on schools and hospitals. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to Yemen.*

## Saudi- and Emirati-Led Coalition and Allied Militias

### Recommendation to Re-list for Attacks on Schools and Hospitals<sup>90</sup>

According to the Secretary-General's most recent annual report on children and armed conflict, the coalition led by Saudi Arabia and the UAE was responsible for 12 UN-verified attacks on schools and three UN-verified attacks on hospitals in 2018.<sup>91</sup> Yet Secretary-General Guterres failed to list the coalition for attacks on schools and hospitals in his 2019 annual report.

Despite a reduction in the number of airstrikes impacting civilians since November 2018,<sup>92</sup> attacks on schools and hospitals by the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition continued in 2019. The Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen concluded in August 2019 that the repeated patterns of coalition airstrikes on civilian infrastructure raise "a serious doubt about whether the targeting process adopted by the coalition complied with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law."<sup>93</sup> The Group of Eminent Experts also found that coalition airstrikes had, in fact, damaged or destroyed medical facilities in Yemen in the first six months of 2019.<sup>94</sup>

88 Browne, Malachy, et al., "Hospitals and Schools Are Being Bombed in Syria. A U.N. Inquiry Is Limited. We Took a Deeper Look," *The New York Times*, December 31, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/12/31/world/middleeast/syria-united-nations-investigation.html> (accessed March 25, 2020).

89 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolutions 2139 (2014), 2165 (2014), 2191 (2014), 2258 (2015), 2332 (2016), 2393 (2017), 2401 (2018) and 2449 (2018)" (S/2019/508), Box 1, para. 5(h).

90 According to the Secretary-General's 2010 annual report on children and armed conflict (A/64/742-S/2010/181), a party will be de-listed "on condition that there is United Nations-verified information that it has ceased commission of all the said grave violations against children for which the party is listed [...] for a period of at least one reporting cycle." As part of the de-listing process, a listed party is required to sign and fully implement a concrete, time-bound action plan to end and prevent grave violations for which it is listed. The Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition was de-listed for attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen in 2018, despite being responsible for 19 out of 20 UN-verified attacks on schools and five out of 11 UN-verified attacks on hospitals in 2017. The UN has continued to document attacks on schools and hospitals attributable to the coalition since that time. Given the premature de-listing, Watchlist calls on the Secretary-General to *re-list* the coalition until it has successfully met the abovementioned criteria.

91 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict" (A/73/907-S/2019/509), para. 193.

92 Physicians for Human Rights and Mwatana for Human Rights, "*I Ripped the IV Out and Started Running*": *Attacks on Health Care in Yemen*, March 2020, <https://phr.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/PHR-Mwatana-March-2020-Report-Attacks-on-Health-Care-in-Yemen-ENGLISH.pdf> (accessed March 28, 2020), p. 33.

93 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts as Submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, Including Violations and Abuses Since September 2014" (A/HRC/42/17), August 9, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/42/17> (accessed March 3, 2020), para. 30.

94 *Ibid.*, para. 52.

On January 19, 2019, for example, coalition airstrikes reportedly hit the Saudi-German Hospital in Ar Rawdah, north of Sana'a.<sup>95</sup> In another instance, a hospital and a pharmacy were reportedly damaged after a coalition aircraft dropped an explosive ordnance in the Kitaf district of Sad'ah governorate on March 26, 2019. The Panel of Experts documented four child deaths and one injury as a result of the strike.<sup>96</sup> Reportedly, additional hospital infrastructure and medical equipment, including the generator, an ambulance, and medicines, were damaged as a result of the attack, and the hospital was forced to close.<sup>97</sup> The Panel of Experts reported that the coordinates of both the hospital and the pharmacy had been available at the time of the attack, and that the hospital had been on the coalition's "no strike" list.<sup>98</sup> The coalition's own Joint Incidents Assessment Team (JIAT) investigated the incident, concluding that it was due to a "technical defect."<sup>99</sup> The Panel sent a letter to Saudi Arabia regarding this incident, but was still awaiting a reply as of January 2020.<sup>100</sup>

Schools were also affected by coalition strikes in 2019. On March 7, 2019, for example, coalition airstrikes reportedly targeted Bani Malik school in Kushar district, east of Hajjah border governorate.<sup>101</sup> In another incident, on

April 7, 2019, a school in Sana'a was damaged when an airstrike hit a nearby weapons cache in Sawan in Shuaub. As a result, 14 civilians, including 13 children, were killed and another 95 civilians were injured.<sup>102</sup> According to HRW, Saudi Arabia-owned *al-Arabiya* published, broadcast, and later deleted a report that the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition had carried out an airstrike in the area that day.<sup>103</sup> On June 13, 2019, a "double-tap" coalition airstrike hit al-Qutaynat primary school in the Baqim district of Sad'ah. Though no casualties were reported, the school was severely damaged.<sup>104</sup>

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

Multiple credible sources, including the Group of International and Regional Eminent Experts on Yemen and *The New York Times*, cited evidence of the recruitment and use of children, including from Darfur, by the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition in 2018.<sup>105</sup> Such reports continued in 2019.

In an oral statement delivered in March 2019, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet cited reports that the Yemeni government

95 ACLED, <https://www.acleddata.com> (accessed March 13, 2020).

96 UN Security Council, "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen" (S/2020/70), January 27, 2020, <https://undocs.org/S/2020/70> (accessed March 2, 2020), Appendix 2, paras. 1-2.

97 Save the Children, "Yemen Hospital Bombing: Number of Children Killed Rises to Five," press release, March 27, 2019, <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/yemen-hospital-bombing--number-of-children-killed-rises-to-five> (accessed March 2, 2020).

98 UN Security Council, "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen" (S/2020/70), Appendix 2, para. 10.

99 Saudi Press Agency, "JIAT Official Spokesman Holds Press Conference 4," June 12, 2019, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/viewstory.php?lang=en&newsid=1933922> (accessed March 25, 2020).

100 UN Security Council, "Final Report of the Panel of Experts on Yemen" (S/2020/70), Appendix 2, para. 93.

101 ACLED, <https://www.acleddata.com> (accessed March 13, 2020).

102 Civilian Impact Monitoring Project, "2019 Annual Report, 1 January – 31 December 2019," March 2020, <https://civilianimpactmonitoring.org/onewebmedia/2019%20CIMP%20Annual%20Report.pdf> (accessed March 25, 2020), p. 1.

103 HRW, "Yemen: Warehouse Blast Kills Schoolchildren," press release, May 9, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/05/09/yemen-warehouse-blast-kills-schoolchildren> (accessed March 25, 2020).

104 UN Human Rights Council, "Report of the Detailed Findings of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, Including Violations and Abuses Since September 2014" (A/HRC/42/CRP.1), September 3, 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/GEE-Yemen/A\\_HRC\\_42\\_CRP\\_1.PDF](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/GEE-Yemen/A_HRC_42_CRP_1.PDF) (accessed March 3, 2020), para. 717.

105 See, for example: UN Human Rights Council, "Situation of human rights in Yemen, including violations and abuses since September 2014" (A/HRC/39/43), August 17, 2018, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/YE/A\\_HRC\\_39\\_43\\_EN.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/YE/A_HRC_39_43_EN.docx) (accessed May 5, 2019), p. 13; Kirkpatrick, David D., "On the Front Line of the Saudi War in Yemen: Child Soldiers in Darfur," *The New York Times*, December 28, 2018, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/28/world/africa/saudi-sudan-yemen-child-fighters.html> (accessed May 5, 2019).

and forces backed by the Saudi- and Emirati-led coalition continued to recruit and use children in hostilities. Most of the children were reportedly aged between 11 and 17, though the High Commissioner noted “consistent reports” of the recruitment and use of children as young as eight years old.<sup>106</sup>

An April 2019 *Al Jazeera* report alleges to contain exclusive footage documenting the coalition’s recruitment and use of Yemeni children.<sup>107</sup>

In August 2019, the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen reported that “coalition-affiliated forces” continued to recruit children. Five children – all between 14 and 16 years old – were recruited in January by Shabwah Elite forces backed by the UAE. One of these children was reportedly killed in combat.<sup>108</sup> In more detailed findings released in September, the Group of Experts reported that it had documented the recruitment and use of children by all parties to the conflict.<sup>109</sup>

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106 OHCHR, “Oral Update on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen – 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the Human Rights Council,” March 20, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=24373&LangID=E> (accessed March 2, 2020).

107 “Exclusive: Yemeni Child Soldiers Recruited by Saudi-UAE Coalition,” *Al Jazeera*, April 1, 2019, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2019/03/exclusive-yemeni-child-soldiers-recruited-saudi-uae-coalition-190329132329547.html> (accessed May 5, 2019).

108 UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts as Submitted to the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, Including Violations and Abuses Since September 2014” (A/HRC/42/17), para. 84.

109 UN Human Rights Council, “Report of the Detailed Findings of the Group of Eminent International and Regional Experts on Yemen on the Situation of Human Rights in Yemen, Including Violations and Abuses Since September 2014” (A/HRC/42/CRP.1), para. 672.

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## Annex II Countries

### Nigeria

*Boko Haram is listed in the Secretary-General's most recent report on children and armed conflict for all five "trigger" violations, while the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) is listed for recruitment and use.*

### Philippines

*Abu Sayyaf Group, Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters, and the New People's Army are currently listed for recruiting and using children in the Philippines.*

# Countries in the Report/Not Yet Listed

In his 2019 annual report on children and armed conflict, the Secretary-General included information on the situation of children in India, Israel and the State of Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, and Thailand. However, no parties to conflict from these countries were listed in the annexes of his report. Watchlist makes the following recommendations with regard to these situations of concern.

## Israel and the State of Palestine

### Israeli Forces

#### Recommendation to List for Killing and Maiming

In 2018, the UN verified the highest number of Palestinian children killed (59) and injured (2,756) since 2014, with most of the casualties attributed to Israeli forces (56 killed, 2,733 injured). Yet Secretary-General Guterres failed to list Israeli forces for killing and maiming children in his 2019 annual report.

Child casualties continued in 2019 and are well-documented in the Secretary-General's quarterly reports to the Security Council, as well as by other UN agencies.

According to a report from the Secretary-General, between December 15, 2018 and March 15, 2019, Israeli forces killed 10 Palestinian children (seven in Gaza, three in the West Bank) and injured 193 children in the

West Bank.<sup>110</sup> On March 30, 2019, three children were reportedly killed by Israeli fire during demonstrations related to the Great March of Return.<sup>111</sup> In the West Bank, Israeli forces reportedly killed one Palestinian child during demonstrations, clashes, security operations, and other incidents.<sup>112</sup> On March 27, 2019, Israeli forces allegedly shot a 17-year-old Palestinian medic near a refugee camp, who later died of his wounds.<sup>113</sup> The Israel Defense Force (IDF) reportedly killed two Palestinian children when it launched airstrikes in retaliation for projectiles launched from Gaza towards Israel on May 4 and 5, 2019.<sup>114</sup> On May 31, 2019, a 16-year-old Palestinian boy was reportedly killed while trying to cross a separation barrier.<sup>115</sup>

Between June 11 and September 11, 2019, the IDF reportedly killed two Palestinian children in the course of riot dispersal in Gaza.<sup>116</sup> In a separate incident during the same period, the IDF allegedly shot and killed two Palestinian teenagers at the Gaza perimeter fence during the Great March of Return.<sup>117</sup> On July 12, 2019, a

110 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016)" (S/2019/251), March 20, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/2019/251> (accessed February 27, 2020), paras. 12, 15, 20.

111 UN Security Council, 74th year, 8557th meeting, UN Doc S/PV.8557, June 20, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/PV.8557> (accessed February 27, 2020), p. 3.

112 Ibid.

113 Ibid.

114 Ibid.

115 Ibid.

116 UN Security Council, 74th year, 8625th meeting, UN Doc S/PV.8625, September 20, 2019, <https://undocs.org/en/S/PV.8625> (accessed February 27, 2020), p. 4.

117 Ibid.

nine-year-old Palestinian boy was reportedly shot in the forehead by Israeli forces during clashes in the West Bank, leaving him in critical condition as of September 2019.<sup>118</sup>

The Secretary-General reported that between September 12 and December 6, 2019, Israeli forces killed nine Palestinian children as a result of airstrikes and during demonstrations, clashes, security operations, and other incidents.<sup>119</sup> In response to rockets fired by Palestinian Islamic Jihad between November 12 and 14, 2019, the IDF conducted a number of strikes on Gaza that allegedly resulted in the deaths of eight Palestinian children and injury of 51.<sup>120</sup>

The IDF reportedly injured 790 Palestinian children with tear gas and live ammunition during demonstrations at the Gaza perimeter fence during the last quarter of 2019.<sup>121</sup> Israeli forces allegedly injured an additional 23 children during demonstrations, clashes, security operations, and other incidents in the occupied West Bank.<sup>122</sup>

In addition to the reports cited above, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) recorded the killing of 27 Palestinian children (25 boys, two girls) by Israeli forces between January 1 and December 31, 2019.<sup>123</sup> The majority were reportedly killed by live ammunition (14) and air-launched explosive weapons (10). During 2019, OCHA also reported 5,314 Palestinian boys injured by Israeli forces (2,352 by tear gas inhalation, 861 by rubber bullets, 781 by other causes, 651 hit by tear gas cannisters, 576 by live ammunition, 60 by air-launched explosive weapons, 26 by physical

assault, six by surface-launched explosive weapons).<sup>124</sup> Israeli forces were reportedly responsible for the injury of 223 Palestinian girls (107 by tear gas inhalation, 39 by other causes, 35 by rubber bullets, 19 by air-launched explosive weapons, 19 by tear gas cannister hits, three by live ammunition, one by physical assault).<sup>125</sup>

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

Between November 1, 2018 and September 30, 2019, OHCHR recorded a total of 66 incidents of interference in education by Israeli forces in the H2 area of Hebron, which affected 9,526 children (including 461 girls).<sup>126</sup> On November 3, 5, and 6, 2019, Israeli forces allegedly fired tear gas canisters and stun grenades into two school compounds, in response to an incident on November 3, during which a few school children reportedly threw stones at a military patrol nearby.<sup>127</sup>

## **Libya**

### **Libyan National Army (LNA), including Pro-Haftar Militias and Allied Foreign Forces**

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

In his 2019 annual report, Secretary-General Guterres noted that access constraints and security concerns restricted the ability of UN monitors to verify grave

118 Ibid.

119 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016)" (S/2019/938), December 12, 2019, <https://undocs.org/S/2019/938> (accessed February 27, 2020), para. 10.

120 Ibid., paras. 11, 12.

121 Ibid., para. 16.

122 Ibid., para. 17.

123 OCHA, "Occupied Palestinian Territory, Data on Casualties," website, <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties> (accessed February 27, 2020).

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid.

126 UN Human Rights Council, "Annual Report of the UN High Commissioner and the Secretary-General on the Human Rights Situation in Palestine and Other Occupied Arab Territories" (A/HRC/43/67), January 30, 2020, <https://undocs.org/en/A/HRC/43/67> (accessed February 27, 2020), p. 10.

127 UN Security Council, "Report of the Secretary-General on the Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2334 (2016)" (S/2019/938), para. 20.

violations against children in Libya. These circumstances continued to present challenges to verification and attribution of reported grave violations in 2019.

Despite these difficulties, the UN attributed at least four separate incidents to the LNA, including militias and allied foreign forces supporting General Khalifa Haftar, which resulted in the killing of at least 12 children and injury of five since its campaign on Tripoli began on April 4, 2019.

On July 2, 2019, airstrikes hitting Tajoura Detention Center resulted in the death of 53 migrants, including six children.<sup>128</sup> A joint report by the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) and OHCHR found “that the airstrikes were likely conducted by aircraft belonging to a foreign state, noting that, “it remains unclear whether these air assets were under the command of the LNA or were operated under the command of that foreign state in support of the LNA.”<sup>129</sup>

UNSMIL reported that, on October 6, 2019, an LNA aircraft dropped four unguided bombs on an equestrian club 350 meters from the UN compound in Tripoli, injuring five children.<sup>130</sup> UNSMIL also reported two separate incidents carried out by LNA air assets that resulted in the deaths of at least six children, on October 14 and December 2, 2019.<sup>131</sup>

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128 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya” (S/2019/682), August 26, 2019, [https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_on\\_unsmil\\_s\\_2019\\_628e.pdf](https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_on_unsmil_s_2019_628e.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2020), para. 19; “Six Children Among 53 Confirmed Fatalities After Libyan Detention Centre Airstrikes: Security Council Condemns Attack,” UN News, July 5, 2019, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/07/1041911> (accessed March 13, 2020).

129 UNSMIL and OHCHR, “The Airstrikes on the Daman Building Complex, Including the Tajoura Detention Centre: 2 July 2019,” January 27, 2020, <https://unsmil.unmissions.org/un-report-urges-accountability-libya-airstrike-deaths> (accessed March 13, 2020).

130 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Support Mission in Libya” (S/2020/41), January 15, 2020, [https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg\\_report\\_to\\_sc\\_15\\_january\\_2020\\_eng.pdf](https://unsmil.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/sg_report_to_sc_15_january_2020_eng.pdf) (accessed February 25, 2020), para. 26.

131 Ibid.

# Countries Not Yet in the Report

As outlined earlier in this policy note, the Secretary-General is mandated to bring to the Security Council's attention 'other situations of concern,' including those which may not be on the Council's agenda, but where the protection of children is of concern. Watchlist calls upon Secretary-General Guterres to make effective use of his annual report to bring the following country situations to the attention of the Security Council.

## Cameroon

### Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

Since 2017, credible sources have documented attacks against schools and hospitals by both sides of the conflict in the North-West (NW) and South-West (SW) regions of Cameroon. Armed separatists have deliberately targeted schools in these regions, leaving more than 855,000 children out of school.<sup>132</sup> Attacks against schools have included abductions of students and teachers, attacks and threats of attack against teachers and students, and the destruction of educational facilities.

By the end of May 2019, OCHA had recorded 59 attacks on students, parents, teachers, and other education personnel for the 2018-2019 academic year.<sup>133</sup> These attacks continued unabatedly throughout 2019, further exacerbating the education crisis and contributing to other protection risks for children,

including sexual exploitation and abuse, gender-based violence, forced recruitment by armed forces or armed groups, arbitrary arrest, and early marriage.<sup>134</sup>

In a particularly notable incident on February 16, 2019, armed separatists abducted 170 students – mostly girls under the age of 18 – a teacher, and two guards from a boarding school in Kumbo (NW).<sup>135</sup> Other incidents include the following:

- On May 21, 2019, a teacher was reportedly beheaded in Bamenda (NW). Both the government and NSAGs denied responsibility.<sup>136</sup>
- On May 24, 2019, three teachers were reportedly abducted by Ambazonian separatists in Bakweri town, Buea region (SW).<sup>137</sup>
- On June 13, 2019, armed men reportedly cut off the leg of a teacher in Mungo village (SW), leaving the teacher in critical condition.<sup>138</sup>

132 UNICEF, "More Than 855,000 Children Remain Out of School in North-West and South-West Cameroon," press release, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/more-855000-children-remain-out-school-north-west-and-south-west-cameroon> (accessed March 16, 2020).

133 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 7," May 31, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ocha\\_sitrep\\_nwsw\\_n\\_07\\_ok.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ocha_sitrep_nwsw_n_07_ok.pdf) (accessed February 20, 2020).

134 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 11," September 30, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/september\\_2019\\_sitrep.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/september_2019_sitrep.pdf) (accessed March 4, 2020).

135 Mudge, Lewis, "Residents Caught in Outbreak of Violence in Cameroon," HRW, February 20, 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/02/20/residents-caught-outbreak-violence-cameroon> (accessed March 12, 2020).

136 OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 7."

137 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, May 2019," May 31, 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief-May-2019-1.pdf> (accessed March 19, 2020).

138 Ibid.

- In September 2019, OCHA reported that three female students from a Catholic school at Ngongham (Bamenda, NW) were kidnapped by suspected NSAGs while en route to school.<sup>139</sup>
- When violence between government forces and separatists escalated in September in the NW and SW regions, separatists reportedly destroyed nine schools.<sup>140</sup>

Health care facilities have also been subject to attacks by warring parties in Cameroon. In February 2019, several health facilities were deliberately targeted amid clashes between government forces and separatists. These include the looting of a health center in Wosing village on February 15, allegedly by separatists, and the destruction of the Kumba district hospital (SW) on February 11.<sup>141</sup> In the latter case, the government blamed the attack on Anglophone separatists, while the separatists insisted government forces were responsible. Four people, including two patients, were reportedly killed in the incident.<sup>142</sup>

In May 2019, OCHA reported widespread looting, arson, and destruction of property in the context of clashes between government forces and separatists in the NW and SW regions, noting that health clinics

were amongst properties burned “as punitive and retaliatory measures.”<sup>143</sup> Between June 8 and 10, 2019, fighting between government forces and opposition armed groups in Esu-Wum (NW) reportedly led to the destruction of a health center.<sup>144</sup>

In July 2019, OCHA received reports of at least three attacks on health care.<sup>145</sup> In August 2019, OCHA reported that the Akwaya District Hospital (NW) and an ambulance in Akum (NW) had been attacked.<sup>146</sup> In a September 2019 situation report, OCHA reported that there had been “at least two attacks [...] resulting in the arrests of healthcare providers by government security forces.”<sup>147</sup>

In October 2019, OCHA reported that a health facility in Tole (SW) was destroyed by NSAGs after being used as a base by government forces.<sup>148</sup> In December, health actors recorded three attacks on healthcare facilities in Ekondo-Titi (SW), Idenau (SW), and BuaBua (NW).<sup>149</sup>

## Recruitment and Use

In 2019, there were credible reports of children being recruited and used in the context of the conflict in the NW and SW regions of Cameroon. In May 2019, OCHA noted an increase in the number of reports of the participation of children in armed groups in the NW and SW regions.<sup>150</sup>

139 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 11.”

140 Kindzeka, Moki Edwin, “Cameroon’s Separatists Intensify Attacks to Protest Dialogue,” *VOA News*, September 24, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/camerouns-separatists-intensify-attacks-protest-dialogue> (accessed March 4, 2020).

141 Mudge, Lewis, “Residents Caught in Outbreak of Violence in Cameroon.”

142 Kindzeka, Moki Edwin, “Cameroon Hospital Attacked; Medical Staff, Patients Flee,” *VOA News*, February 12, 2019, <https://www.voanews.com/africa/cameroon-hospital-attacked-medical-staff-patients-flee> (accessed March 4, 2020).

143 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 7.”

144 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 8,” June 30, 2019, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/cameroon/document/cameroon-north-west-and-south-west-crisis-situation-report-n%C2%B08-30-june> (accessed March 4, 2020).

145 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 9,” July 31, 2019, [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha\\_cameroon\\_nsw\\_sitreport\\_no9\\_july\\_19\\_rev5.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/ocha_cameroon_nsw_sitreport_no9_july_19_rev5.pdf) (accessed March 4, 2020).

146 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 10,” August 31, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ocha\\_cameroon\\_nsw\\_sitreport\\_no10\\_august19\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/ocha_cameroon_nsw_sitreport_no10_august19_final.pdf) (accessed March 12, 2020).

147 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 11.”

148 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 12,” October 31, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/nswsw\\_oct\\_sitrep\\_draft\\_21nov19\\_v4.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/nswsw_oct_sitrep_draft_21nov19_v4.pdf) (accessed March 13, 2020).

149 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 13 and 14,” December 31, 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/cameroon\\_north-west\\_and\\_south-west\\_crisis\\_situation\\_report\\_n13\\_14\\_as\\_of\\_31\\_december\\_2019\\_final.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/cameroon_north-west_and_south-west_crisis_situation_report_n13_14_as_of_31_december_2019_final.pdf) (accessed March 13, 2020).

150 OCHA, “Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 7.”

That same month, OCHA also reported that many men and boys remained in the bush in the NW to avoid forced recruitment. Meanwhile, in the SW, young men and boys suspected of association with NSAGs were reportedly subject to arbitrary arrests by government forces.<sup>151</sup>

In July 2019, OCHA noted that four children (two boys, two girls) were identified as suspected of association with NSAGs in the NW and SW regions.<sup>152</sup> In November 2019, child protection actors reported an increase in the number of adolescent boys leaving NSAGs. They also documented several cases of arbitrary arrests and detention of adolescent boys suspected of association with NSAGs.<sup>153</sup>

## Abductions

As outlined above, Anglophone separatists have frequently abducted students and education personnel in the context of the conflict in NW and SW Cameroon, with UNICEF reporting in June 2019 that more than 300 students and teachers had been kidnapped since 2018.<sup>154</sup> Many of these incidents may also qualify as attacks on schools and have been detailed above, such as the February 16, 2019 abduction of 170 students from a boarding school in Kumbo (NW).<sup>155</sup>

## The Sahel (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger)

Over the past two years, State and non-State armed actors have intensified attacks in parts of Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger. In many cases, they have deliberately

targeted children, scores of whom have been killed or maimed in attacks. Other children have been targeted for recruitment or abducted, while armed groups have also attacked schools and health facilities.<sup>156</sup> Armed groups are operating across borders, exacerbating intracommunal tensions and raising concerns for spillover into neighboring countries further south into littoral West Africa.<sup>157</sup> While Mali has already been included in the Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict, the cross-border dynamics of violence in the Sahel and its impact on children should be brought to the attention of the Security Council.

## Killing and Maiming

In Mali, many atrocities against children have been credibly linked to ethnic militias that formed in response to the sparse presence of State security forces. Groups implicated include Dan Na Ambassagou, active in areas bordering Burkina Faso, as well as less-organized Peuhl self-defense groups. In Mali and Burkina Faso, armed Islamist groups linked to both Al-Qaeda and the Islamic State in Greater Sahara (ISGS) have been implicated in numerous atrocities in which children have been killed. Child casualties were reported<sup>158</sup> in the following incidents:

- On February 16, 2019, Dogon militia attacked Minima Maoude-Peuuhl, Bankass *cercle* (Mali), killing six villagers, including a seven-year-old girl. The bodies of the child, her father, and another man were reportedly found burned inside their homes.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 9."

<sup>153</sup> OCHA, "Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 13 and 14."

<sup>154</sup> UNICEF, "Over 80 Per Cent of Schools Closed as a Result of Crisis, Denying More Than 600,000 Children Access to Education," press release, June 21, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/geneva-palais-briefing-note-situation-children-north-west-and-south-west-regions> (accessed March 4, 2020).

<sup>155</sup> Mudge, Lewis, "Residents Caught in Outbreak of Violence in Cameroon."

<sup>156</sup> UNICEF, "Central Sahel: Advocacy Brief," January 2020, [https://www.unicef.org/media/64586/file/Central-sahel-advocacy\\_brief-2020.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/media/64586/file/Central-sahel-advocacy_brief-2020.pdf) (accessed March 20, 2020), p. 12.

<sup>157</sup> OCHA, "Humanitarian Crisis in the Sahel: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso (May 2019)," May 8, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/mali/humanitarian-crisis-sahel-mali-niger-burkina-faso-may-2019> (accessed March 19, 2020).

<sup>158</sup> HRW, "How Much More Blood Must Be Spilled?" *Atrocities Against Civilians in Central Mali, 2019*, February 10, 2020, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2020/02/10/how-much-more-blood-must-be-spilled/atrocities-against-civilians-central-mali-2019> (accessed March 30, 2020).

- In early March 2019, Dogon militia reportedly attacked Didia village in Koro *cercle* (Mali), killing seven people, including three children.
- On March 23, 2019, over 100 armed Dogon-speaking men reportedly attacked the Peuhl neighborhood of Ogossagou village, Bankass *cercle* (Mali), and killed at least 152 civilians, including over 40 children.
- On June 9, 2019, armed Peuhl men reportedly attacked the Dogon village of Sobane-Da, Bandiagara *cercle* (Mali), and killed 35 civilians, including over 20 children.
- On June 17, 2019, dozens of heavily armed Islamists reportedly executed at least 38 civilians, including several children, from the neighboring villages of Yoro and Gangafani II, in Koro *cercle*, near Mali's border with Burkina Faso.

## Recruitment and Use

According to UNICEF, children in Niger and Burkina Faso have been victims of recruitment and use by armed groups in the context of the current violence.<sup>159</sup> Throughout 2019, UNICEF Niger worked to separate children from NSAGs, reporting on at least eight cases in monthly situation reports.<sup>160</sup>

## Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

UNICEF has said that “the sharp increase” in armed attacks on schools, health centers, and other public infrastructures in Central Sahel is at “unprecedented levels,” disrupting livelihoods and access to social services.<sup>161</sup> By the end of 2019, more than 3,300 schools in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger were closed or non-operational due to violence – a six-fold increase since April 2017 – affecting 650,000 children and 16,000 teachers.<sup>162</sup> In his December 2019 report on the activities of the UN Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS), the Secretary-General expressed deep concern about the closure of thousands of schools and health facilities in the areas of the Sahel affected by instability.<sup>163</sup> Reported attacks include the following:

- On January 4, 2019, unidentified perpetrators assumed to be militants from the Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) armed group set fire to a school in Petanaye town, Nord region (Burkina Faso).<sup>164</sup>
- On February 13, 2019, an ambulance transporting a pregnant woman from Diapaga to Fada-N'gourma in Ougarou area, Est region (Burkina Faso) was reportedly shot at by presumed members of an Islamist armed group, leaving the pregnant woman's partner with a gunshot wound.<sup>165</sup>
- On February 1, 2019, presumed members of JNIM or ISGS reportedly burned down the primary school in Kabonga town, Est region (Burkina Faso).<sup>166</sup>

159 UNICEF, “Central Sahel: Advocacy Brief,” p. 12.

160 See: UNICEF Niger Humanitarian Situation Reports from April, May, and September 2019, available at <https://reliefweb.int/updates>.

161 UNICEF, “Central Sahel: Advocacy Brief,” p. 2.

162 UNICEF, “Nearly 5 Million Children Will Need Humanitarian Assistance in Central Sahel This Year as Violence Surges,” press release, January 27, 2020, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/nearly-5-million-children-will-need-humanitarian-assistance-central-sahel-year> (accessed March 18, 2020).

163 UN Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the Activities of the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel” (S/2019/1005), December 30, 2019, <https://unowas.unmissions.org/report-secretary-general-activities-unowas-s20191005-dec-2019> (accessed March 19, 2020), para. 93.

164 Insecurity Insight, “Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, January 2019,” January 31, 2019, <http://www.insecurityinsight.org/aidindanger/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief-January-2019.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2020).

165 Insecurity Insight, “Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, February 2019,” March 26, 2019, <http://www.insecurityinsight.org/aidindanger/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Attacks-on-Health-Care-Monthly-News-Brief-February-2019.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2020).

166 Ibid.

- On February 3, 2019, presumed members of JNIM or ISGS allegedly burned down a school in Salmossi village, Sahel region (Burkina Faso).<sup>167</sup>
- Also on February 3, 2019, presumed members of JNIM or ISGS allegedly fired gunshots in the air and set fire to a school in Intissalatene village, Tollel Kaya area (Burkina Faso) before stealing teachers' motorbikes and escaping.
- On March 11, 2019, two teachers were reportedly abducted and killed in Centre-Nord region, between Namssiguia and Djibo towns (Burkina Faso).<sup>168</sup>
- On April 26, 2019, armed men reportedly attacked a school in Maytagou, Centre Est region (Burkina Faso), and executed five teachers.<sup>169</sup>
- In mid-July, the Kinséré primary school and teachers' homes were reportedly set on fire by unidentified armed elements in the Boucle du Mouhoun region (Burkina Faso), affecting 176 students and five teachers.<sup>170</sup>
- Also in July, UNICEF reported that unidentified armed men burned down five schools in Mansila, Yagha province, Sahel region (Burkina Faso), and threatened to destroy remaining schools in the area if they were reopened.<sup>171</sup>
- In September, UNICEF reported that an NSAG had looted five ambulances and burned one down in the Sahel health district (Burkina Faso).<sup>172</sup>
- On October 4, 2019, suspected JNIM members reportedly burned down a school in Bouni village (Burkina Faso).<sup>173</sup>
- On October 14, 2019, presumed JNIM members reportedly pillaged a school in Lanfiera, Sourou province (Burkina Faso).<sup>174</sup>
- On October 25, 2019, suspected JNIM members allegedly kidnapped two teachers from a market in Rounga village, Ouindigui commune, Loroum province (Burkina Faso), and later executed them.<sup>175</sup>
- On November 20, 2019, a school was reportedly ransacked by unidentified gunmen in Oulfo Alfa village, Seno province, Sahel region (Burkina Faso).<sup>176</sup>
- On November 27, 2019, presumed ISGS members reportedly entered an unnamed school in Tigueze Fan Raoufi village, Filingue, Tillabéri region (Niger), and whipped four teachers as punishment for teaching the modern school system.<sup>177</sup>
- On November 29, 2019, one health worker from Gorom Gorom district, Sahel region (Burkina Faso) being held hostage by NSAGs was killed.<sup>178</sup>

167 Ibid.

168 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, March 2019," March 31, 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief-March-2019.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2020).

169 UNICEF, "UNICEF Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 2, April 2019," April 30, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/unicef-burkina-faso-humanitarian-situation-report-no-2-april-2019> (accessed March 18, 2020).

170 UNICEF, "UNICEF Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 5, July 2019," July 31, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/unicef-burkina-faso-humanitarian-situation-report-no-5-july-2019> (accessed March 18, 2020).

171 Ibid.

172 UNICEF, "UNICEF Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 7, September 2019," September 30, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/unicef-burkina-faso-humanitarian-situation-report-no-7-september-2019> (accessed March 20, 2020).

173 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, October 2019," October 31, 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/October-2019-Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2020).

174 Ibid.

175 Ibid.

176 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, November 2019," November 30, 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/November-2019-Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief.pdf> (accessed March 20, 2020).

177 Ibid.

178 UNICEF, "UNICEF Burkina Faso Humanitarian Situation Report No. 9, November 2019," November 30, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/unicef-burkina-faso-humanitarian-situation-report-no-9-november-2019> (accessed March 20, 2020).

- On December 10, 2019, suspected members of JNIM allegedly attacked a lower secondary school in Bonou village, Sourou province (Burkina Faso), assaulted a guard, and ransacked the office of the school's director.<sup>179</sup>

## Abductions

In May 2019, UNICEF reported that 14 children (nine girls, five boys) and 35 women were abducted in the Diffa region (Niger) in the context of attacks by NSAGs against civilians.<sup>180</sup> In early June 2019, armed attackers reportedly raided a village in southern Diffa (Niger) and abducted 10 women and three children.<sup>181</sup> On July 4, 2019, suspected members of the Islamic State in West Africa Province (ISWAP/Boko Haram) reportedly abducted a schoolgirl in Bosso, Diffa province (Niger),<sup>182</sup> and in late August, a woman and two girls were reportedly abducted in Bague village (Niger).<sup>183</sup>

## Ukraine

Since 2014, the conflict in eastern Ukraine has raised serious concerns for the situation of children. Over the past six years, thousands of children have been deprived their right to education due to attacks on

schools, and hundreds more have been killed or maimed as a result of explosive weapons. According to UNICEF, over 750 educational facilities have either been damaged or destroyed since the conflict began.<sup>184</sup> These concerns continued in 2019 and into 2020.

## Killing and Maiming

Since the start of the conflict in eastern Ukraine on April 14, 2014, through February 15, 2019, OHCHR recorded the killing of 97 boys and 49 girls.<sup>185</sup> Children continued to be impacted throughout 2019. According to OHCHR, between February 16 and May 15, 2019, one boy and one girl were injured by shelling and small arms and light weapons.<sup>186</sup> One boy was killed and another injured as a result of explosive remnants of war (ERWs).<sup>187</sup> Between May 16 and August 15, 2019, six girls and three boys were injured in conflict-related incidents, including two boys injured by ERWs.<sup>188</sup>

Between August 16 and November 15, 2019, OHCHR recorded seven conflict-related child casualties (two girls, five boys).<sup>189</sup> These included three boys and two girls who were injured on September 28 by inadvertently triggering a hand grenade in armed-group-controlled Chornohorivka (formerly Krasna

179 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, December 2019," December 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/December-2019-Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief.pdf> (accessed March 18, 2020).

180 UNICEF, "UNICEF Niger Humanitarian Situation Report, May 2019," June 30, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/niger/unicef-niger-humanitarian-situation-report-may-2019> (accessed March 19, 2020).

181 OCHA, "West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (4 - 10 June 2019)," June 11, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/burkina-faso/west-and-central-africa-weekly-regional-humanitarian-snapshot-4-10-june-2019> (accessed March 19, 2020).

182 Insecurity Insight, "Education in Danger Monthly News Brief, July 2019," July 31, 2019, <http://insecurityinsight.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/July-2019-Education-in-Danger-Monthly-News-Brief.pdf> (accessed March 19, 2020).

183 OCHA, "West and Central Africa: Weekly Regional Humanitarian Snapshot (20 - 26 August 2019)," August 27, 2019, <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/west-and-central-africa-weekly-regional-humanitarian-snapshot-20-26-august-2019> (accessed March 19, 2020).

184 UNICEF, "430,000 Children Continue to Bear the Brunt of Eastern Ukraine Conflict - UNICEF," press release, December 2, 2019, <https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/430000-children-continue-bear-brunt-eastern-ukraine-conflict-unicef> (accessed March 17, 2020).

185 OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 16 November 2018 to 15 February 2019," March 12, 2019, <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16Nov2018-15Feb2019.pdf> (accessed May 8, 2019), para. 27.

186 OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 16 February to 15 May 2019," June 13, 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16Feb-15May2019\\_EN.docx](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16Feb-15May2019_EN.docx) (accessed February 27, 2020), para. 26.

187 *Ibid.*, p. 5, footnotes 20 and 21.

188 OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 16 May to 15 August 2019," September 17, 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16May-15Aug2019\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/ReportUkraine16May-15Aug2019_EN.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2020), paras. 22-24.

189 OHCHR, "Report on the Human Rights Situation in Ukraine: 16 August to 15 November 2019," December 12, 2019, [https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/28thReportUkraine\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Countries/UA/28thReportUkraine_EN.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2020), pp. 1, 6.

Zoria, Luhansk region), as well as a boy who was injured in territory controlled by the “Luhansk People’s Republic.”<sup>190</sup> As of November 15, confirmation of the attribution of the latter incident was still pending.

## Attacks on Schools and Hospitals

According to the Education Cluster in Ukraine, more than 750 education facilities have been damaged since the start of the conflict in 2014, and some 700,000 children and teachers in 3,500 education facilities in eastern Ukraine are affected by hostilities.<sup>191</sup> Attacks on schools more than doubled in 2019 compared to the previous year, with 36 conflict-related incidents resulting in physical damages to school infrastructure (compared to 16 in 2018).<sup>192</sup> In addition to these incidents, two education facilities were temporarily closed, and there were nine incidents resulting in threat of death or injuries to students, teachers, and parents in 2019.<sup>193</sup> One education facility in Zolote-5/Mykhailiva (Luhanska oblast, Non-Government Controlled Area) was damaged 15 times between January and October 2019, and was temporarily closed due to insecurity for almost a month in February-March 2019.<sup>194</sup>

190 Ibid., pp. 6, 7.

191 Ukraine Education Cluster, “Attacks on Education in Ukraine Situation Report as of January 10, 2020,” January 14, 2020, <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/ukraine/infographic/attacks-education-ukraine-situation-report-10-january-2020> (accessed March 19, 2020).

192 Ukraine Education Cluster, “Attacks on Education in Ukraine Situation Report as of November 1, 2019,” November 2019, [https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/attacks\\_on\\_education\\_situation\\_report\\_as\\_of\\_1\\_november\\_2019.pdf](https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/attacks_on_education_situation_report_as_of_1_november_2019.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2020); UNICEF, “Ukraine Humanitarian Situation Report No. 12,” December 2019, [https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF\\_Ukraine\\_Humanitarian\\_Situation\\_Report\\_\\_Dec\\_2019.pdf](https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Ukraine_Humanitarian_Situation_Report__Dec_2019.pdf) (accessed February 27, 2020).

193 Ibid.

194 UNICEF, “430,000 Children Continue to Bear the Brunt of Eastern Ukraine Conflict - UNICEF.”





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