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promotion and protection of the rights of children

Security Council
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Children and armed conflict

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report, prepared following consultations and covering the period from January to December 2021, is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#). The report includes trends regarding the impact of armed conflict on children and information on violations committed, as requested by the Council in its resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) and subsequent resolutions.¹ Where possible, violations are attributed to parties to conflict and the annexes to the present report include a list of parties engaging in violations against children, namely the recruitment and use of children, the killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, attacks on schools, hospitals and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals,² and the abduction of children.

2. The information contained in the present report was vetted for accuracy by the United Nations. Where information is not verified, it is qualified as such. Where incidents were committed earlier but verified only in 2021, that information is qualified as relating to an incident that was verified at a later date. The information does not represent the full scale of violations against children, as verification depends on many factors, including access. The report presents trends and patterns of

¹ See also the relevant reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in specific country situations, in particular in Colombia ([S/2021/1022](#)), the Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)), Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)), Afghanistan ([S/2021/662](#)), the Syrian Arab Republic ([S/2021/398](#)), and the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the Human Rights Council on children and armed conflict ([A/HRC/49/58](#)).

² For the purposes of the present report, the phrase “protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals”, used in Security Council resolutions [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#) and [2427 \(2018\)](#), as well as in the statements by the President of the Security Council of 17 June 2013 ([S/PRST/2013/8](#)) and 31 October 2017 ([S/PRST/2017/21](#)), refers to teachers, doctors, other educational personnel, students and patients.



violations, and engagement with parties responsible for violations that might lead to behavioural change, including promotion of accountability and inclusion of child protection provisions in peace processes. In the report, it is noted that attacks or threats of attacks on community and civic leaders, on human rights defenders and on monitors of violations against children are a cause for concern and a strain on the monitoring capacity.

3. Pursuant to Security Council resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#), my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict adopted a pragmatic approach to promote broad and effective protection for children. Reference to a situation is not a legal determination, and reference to a non-State actor does not affect its legal status. Accordingly, the report documents situations in which apparent violations of international norms and standards are of such gravity as to warrant international concern, given their impact on children. My Special Representative brings these situations to the attention of Governments, which bear the primary responsibility for protecting children, in order to encourage them to take remedial measures. Where measures undertaken by listed parties had a positive impact on children or where ongoing conduct is of concern, this is highlighted. On the basis of enhanced engagement with parties, the annexes distinguish between listed parties that have put in place measures aimed at improving the protection of children during the reporting period and those that have not.

II. Situation of children and armed conflict

A. Overview of trends and patterns

4. In 2021, children in armed conflict suffered a high number of grave violations. The United Nations verified 23,982 grave violations, of which 22,645 were committed in 2021 and 1,337 were committed earlier but verified only in 2021. Violations affected 19,165 children (13,633 boys, 5,242 girls, 290 sex unknown) in 21 situations and one regional monitoring arrangement. The highest numbers of violations were the killing (2,515) and maiming (5,555) of 8,070 children, followed by the recruitment and use of 6,310 children and 3,945 incidents of denial of humanitarian access.³ Children were detained for actual or alleged association with armed groups (2,864), including those designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations, or for national security reasons.

5. My Special Representative and country task forces made progress in engaging with parties in a number of countries, including Mali, Nigeria, the Philippines, South Sudan, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen to protect children. Engagement with parties to conflict resulted in the release of 12,214 children from armed groups and armed forces.

6. Conflict escalation, the multiplication of armed actors, the use of mines, improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and explosive weapons in populated areas, intensified humanitarian crises, and violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law had a severe impact on the protection of children. Cross-border conflicts and intercommunal violence affected children, in particular in the central Sahel and Lake Chad basin regions, while coups

³ Information related to the denial of humanitarian access to children is presented pursuant to Security Council resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) and follows guidelines of the monitoring and reporting mechanism on children and armed conflict. The information presented herein does not necessarily give an exhaustive view of the full humanitarian access situation in the countries concerned.

and takeovers aggravated the situation of children in Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Mali, Myanmar and the Sudan.

7. The highest numbers of grave violations were verified in Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. The number of cases of abduction increased by over 20 per cent and cases of sexual violence against children continued to increase, by over 20 per cent. The number of attacks on schools and hospitals increased by 5 per cent in a context of school closures, the military use of schools and disregard for children's right to education and health, and the situation was compounded by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Non-State armed groups were responsible for 55 per cent of violations, State forces for 25 per cent, and the remainder of the violations resulted from crossfire, the use of improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and landmines, or were committed by unidentified perpetrators. Over 25 per cent of child casualties resulted from improvised explosive devices, explosive remnants of war and landmines, for a total of 2,257 child casualties.

8. Whereas 70 per cent of children affected by grave violations are boys, the number of violations affecting boys has decreased, while the number of girls who were casualties of killing and maiming, or subjected to abduction and sexual violence, increased, particularly in the Lake Chad basin. Cases of sexual violence continued to be vastly underreported, owing to stigmatization, the fear of reprisals, harmful social norms, the absence of services, impunity, the lack of humanitarian access and safety concerns (S/2022/272). Children with disabilities and displaced children were particularly vulnerable.

B. Challenges and the way forward

9. Compared with the proportion of casualties among adults, children were disproportionately affected by explosive remnants of war, the use of improvised explosive devices and mines, with a steady increase in the number of children killed or maimed by such weapons (9 per cent increase compared with the previous report, A/75/873-S/2021/437). Afghanistan, Colombia, Iraq, Myanmar, South Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Yemen and the Lake Chad basin (areas affected by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups) are particularly affected by the use and impact of such weapons. Efforts must be prioritized to clear explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and mines, provide child-sensitive risk education, and promote assistance to victims. Similarly, indiscriminate and disproportionate attacks using explosive weapons in populated areas have had a severe impact on children, and parties to conflict must avoid the use of explosive weapons in populated areas.

10. The number of attacks on schools continues to rise, including attacks on students and on educational personnel, as well as the military use of schools, depriving children of their right to education and reducing the availability of safe and child-friendly spaces, thus jeopardizing children's future and their access to essential services, as well as making children more vulnerable to other violations. Children are abducted, killed or maimed, and suffer sexual violence, in or on the way to school. Some parties to conflict also use schools as recruitment grounds. In addition, the abduction of girls has increased by 41 per cent. Girls' education has been undermined by targeted attacks on girls' schools and the denial of schooling, particularly in Afghanistan and in the Lake Chad basin region. These attacks further affect girls' already limited access to education in the long term. In Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Mali, Somalia and the Syrian Arab Republic, attacks on schools

were devastating for children. The Security Council, in its resolution 2601 (2021), called for measures to protect schools and mitigate the military use of schools.

11. The pandemic aggravated the existing vulnerabilities of children, including by hampering the fulfilment of their rights, reducing child protection activities and safe spaces. The socioeconomic impact of the pandemic exposed children to grave violations and threatens to undo recent gains in the areas of child protection, human rights and the Sustainable Development Goals, by exposing children, their families and communities to renewed risks, including: economic insecurity; exploitative and hazardous relationships; negative coping mechanisms; social isolation; and reduced access to services and humanitarian assistance. In some contexts, girls may never be able to go back to school, because they have to earn an income or were forcibly married to support their families. We should continue monitoring and adapting programmatic and advocacy responses towards child protection, with a particular focus on girls.

III. Information on grave violations

A. Situations on the agenda of the Security Council

Afghanistan

12. The United Nations verified 2,577 grave violations against 2,430 children (1,579 boys, 798 girls, 53 sex unknown). In addition, 35 grave violations that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021. Serious safety and security challenges were faced by the country task force for monitoring and reporting on violations against children, following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban on 15 August 2021. Parties to conflict affiliated with the government and pro-government parties ceased to exist. Most of the figures presented herein were verified for the period 1 January to 15 August 2021. Reporting by the monitoring and reporting mechanism was temporarily suspended from that moment until 31 December 2021 owing to the lack of access to monitor and verify violations. Reporting resumed in January 2022.

13. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 58 boys, some as young as 12, by the Taliban (34), pro-government militia (16), the Afghan National Police (7), Afghan National Police jointly with the Afghan National Army (1), in the north-eastern (20), south-eastern (14), northern (13), southern (6) central (2), eastern (2) and western (1) regions. Among these boys, 47 were recruited and used prior to 15 August. Children were used in combat, including in suicide attack squads, and support roles, including to make and transport improvised explosive devices for the Taliban.

14. As at mid-August 2021, 166 boys were detained on national security-related charges in juvenile rehabilitation centres. In addition, 168 children (90 boys, 78 girls) were kept in the Kabul female detention centre with their mothers who were detained for alleged or actual affiliation with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-KP). After August 2021, the Taliban announced the release of all prisoners from Pul-e-Charkhi prison, juvenile rehabilitation centres and National Directorate of Security detention facilities, but the United Nations confirmed the continued presence of unknown numbers of children detained with adults in prisons and juvenile rehabilitation centres.

15. The United Nations verified the killing (626) and maiming (1,713) of 2,339 children (1,491 boys, 795 girls, 53 sex unknown), attributed to armed groups (1,047) (Taliban (690), unidentified armed groups (260), ISIL-KP (94), crossfire between Taliban and ISIL-KP (1), self-proclaimed Da'esh (1), Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (1)); and to government and pro-government forces (698) (Afghan National Defence and

Security Forces (582), joint operations of government and pro-government forces (72), pro-government militia (20), unidentified pro-government forces (15), international forces (9)). The remaining casualties were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (238), crossfire between pro-government forces and armed groups (346) and cross-border shelling from Pakistan (10). Child casualties mainly resulted from ground engagement (912), non-suicide improvised explosive devices (699), explosive remnants of war (261), air strikes (224), targeted killings (79) and suicide attacks (65). Of the total number of casualties, 2,074 casualties occurred before 15 August. In addition, the killing (7) and maiming (10) of 17 children (15 boys, 2 girls) in 2020 by unidentified armed groups (8), pro-government forces (5) and unidentified perpetrators (4) were verified in 2021.

16. Cases of sexual violence perpetrated against 8 children (7 boys, 1 girl) by the Afghan National Police (6), Taliban (1) and the Afghan National Army (1) were verified. Six boys were used as *bacha bazi* by the Afghan National Police.⁴

17. The United Nations verified 116 attacks on schools (53) and hospitals (63), including attacks on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, which were attributed to armed groups (65) (Taliban (46), unidentified armed groups (11), ISIL-KP (8)); to government and pro-government forces (32) (Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (26), pro-government militia (3), unidentified pro-government forces (3)); and to unidentified perpetrators (19), including as a result of crossfire between armed groups and government and pro-government forces (17), a grenade (1) and an improvised explosive device (1). Of the total number of attacks, 111 occurred before 15 August. In addition, one attack on a school in 2020 was verified in 2021.

18. As at mid-August, the military use of 35 schools (26) and hospitals (9) by the Taliban (24), and government and pro-government forces (11) (Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (7), pro-government militias (3), pro-government forces operating jointly (1)) was verified.

19. The abduction of 25 children (23 boys, 2 girls) by the Taliban was verified. Twenty children were subsequently released. In addition, the abduction of 17 boys by the Taliban in 2020 was verified in 2021.

20. The United Nations verified 31 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access by the Taliban (16), ISIL-KP (8), unidentified armed groups (6) and a pro-government militia (1). All the incidents occurred before 15 August.

Developments and concerns

21. I appeal to all parties to the conflict to end and prevent grave violations against children. I am concerned by the persistent high number of children killed and maimed, including by landmines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war, and by the high number of attacks on schools and hospitals. I call for the international community to invest in mine clearance and education. I urge the immediate reopening of schools for children in the sixth grade and above, including for all girls.

22. I am further concerned by the impact of the ongoing economic and humanitarian crisis in terms of exacerbating grave violations against children, such as the recruitment and use of children.

⁴ *Bacha bazi* is a harmful practice whereby boys are used by men for entertainment. The boys are made to dance at parties and are often dressed in female clothes and subjected to sexual violence, as reported by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in their annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

23. I urge the Taliban, and other parties, to engage with the United Nations to adopt concrete measures and sign an action plan to end and prevent violations against children, including the recruitment and use of children.

24. I call upon the Taliban to release children from detention and to respect international juvenile justice standards.

25. I urge the Taliban to define a child as every human being below the age of 18 years, and to respect the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

Central African Republic

26. The United Nations verified 925 violations against 646 children (344 boys, 302 girls), including 105 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 154 grave violations affecting 151 children (42 boys, 109 girls) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

27. A total of 329 children (262 boys, 67 girls), some as young as 7, were verified as having been recruited and used, by armed groups (293): Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) (197) (Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) (143), joint operations by anti-balaka and Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) (37), unidentified CPC (8), anti-balaka (6), 3R (3)); Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) (71); and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (25). Some 84 children were used as combatants. A total of 36 children were used by other security personnel (28), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (5), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/internal security forces (2) and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (1) for intelligence gathering, at checkpoints and to run errands. Most violations (189) occurred in Haute-Kotto Prefecture. In addition, in 2021 the United Nations verified cases of the recruitment and use of 80 children (39 boys, 41 girls), by FPRC (70), jointly by Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) and FPRC (7), anti-balaka (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1), which occurred in earlier years.

28. Eight boys were detained by national authorities for alleged association with armed groups. Two remain in detention and the United Nations continues to advocate their release.

29. The United Nations verified the killing (57) and maiming (47) of 104 children (68 boys, 36 girls) caused by gunshots and crossfire (78), shrapnel from an exploded drone (11), mutilations (10), explosive ordnance (3), death resulting from rape (1) and glass shrapnel (1). Violations were attributed to government and pro-government forces (47): other security personnel (18), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (12), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (9) and by anti-balaka elements recruited by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (8); to armed groups (32): CPC (31) (3R (22); anti-balaka/3R (4), jointly by anti-balaka and UPC (2), anti-balaka, FPRC and FPRC/MPC (1 each)) and UPC (1); and to unidentified perpetrators (25), including 20 in crossfire between parties. Most violations occurred in Ouaka (36), Nana-Mambéré (12) and Lobaye (11). In addition, the United Nations verified the maiming of three children by unidentified perpetrators (2) and unidentified CPC (1), which occurred prior to 2021.

30. Rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against 211 girls were verified and mostly attributed to armed groups (171): CPC (145) (unidentified CPC (52); FPRC (43), 3R (28), anti-balaka (10), UPC (6), jointly by anti-balaka and 3R (4), MPC (2)); LRA (13); UPC/Guenderou faction (7); and unidentified ex-Séléka (6). Twenty violations were attributed to government and pro-government forces: the

Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (13), other security personnel (6) and special mixed security units (1), unidentified perpetrators (18) and Chadian National Army elements (2). Cases included rape (205) and forced marriage (6). The United Nations verified cases of sexual violence perpetrated against 65 girls by CPC factions (47) (unidentified CPC (22), anti-balaka (13), 3R (5), UPC (3), FPRC and MPC (2 each)); special mixed security units (8); MPC/FPRC (5); UPC/Guenderou faction (2); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (2); and unidentified ex-Séléka (1), all of which occurred prior to 2021.

31. A total of 52 attacks on schools (26) and hospitals (26), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, were verified and attributed to government and pro-government forces (26): other security personnel (15), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (6), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel/internal security forces (3) and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (2); to armed groups (21): CPC (21) (unidentified CPC and UPC (7 each), 3R (3), FPRC and anti-balaka (2 each)); and to unidentified perpetrators (5). Incidents involved looting, destruction and threats and attacks against related protected persons. The United Nations verified three attacks on schools (2) and hospitals (1) attributed to anti-balaka/3R, unidentified CPC and unidentified perpetrators, which occurred prior to 2021.

32. A total of 55 schools and 4 hospitals were used for military purposes by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (23), other security personnel (15), UPC (10), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (5), unidentified CPC (3), 3R (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1). Four schools continued to be used as at December 2021 by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (2), other security personnel (1) and unidentified CPC (1).

33. The United Nations verified the abduction of 111 children (47 boys, 64 girls) by CPC (76) (FPRC (51), 3R (10), anti-balaka (6), unidentified CPC (6), UPC (3)); LRA (24); unidentified perpetrators (5); by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and by other security personnel (2 each); and by UPC/Guenderou faction and by unidentified ex-Séléka (1 each). Most children were abducted for the purposes of recruitment and use and/or sexual violence (94). One child was killed, 15 children were released, 89 children escaped and the status of 6 children is unknown. The United Nations verified the abduction of children by anti-balaka (2) and FPRC (1), which occurred in previous years.

34. The United Nations verified 118 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access, most of which were attributed to armed groups (70): CPC (66) (unidentified CPC (19), anti-balaka and FPRC (12 each), FPRC/UPC (8), 3R (5), UPC (4), FPRC/MPC and MPC (2 each), anti-balaka/MPC and 3R/MPC (1 each)); UPC/Guenderou faction (3); and unidentified ex-Séléka (1). Responsibility for 19 violations was attributed to government and pro-government forces: other security personnel (7), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (6), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (3), internal security forces (2), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/internal security forces (1), and unidentified perpetrators (29). Most incidents involved robberies, extortion, the destruction of property and assaults on humanitarian personnel.

Developments and concerns

35. I welcome the development by the Government of interministerial plans to implement the Child Protection Code. I remain concerned by the surge in the number of violations against children and by the recurrent attacks on and the military use of schools and hospitals and by the increased number child casualties caused by the

Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and other security personnel. I call upon the Government to swiftly appoint child protection focal points in the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, issue command directives applicable to all forces in the country, and, in cooperation with the United Nations, end and prevent grave violations by the Armed Forces and other security personnel. I urge the Government to investigate ongoing violations and hold perpetrators accountable. I continue to urge the Government to adopt a protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian protection actors.

36. I urge the Government and other signatories of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic to cooperate with the United Nations to develop a national strategy to prevent and eliminate grave violations against children, and I request my Special Representative and the country task force to engage with the Government and signatories of the Agreement in support of this effort.

37. I note that United Nations dialogue with armed groups led to the release of 134 children from FPRC (92) and UPC (42). I am alarmed by the scale of violations attributed to armed groups, particularly CPC, such as the ongoing recruitment and use of children, and a sharp increase in sexual violence, abductions and in the number of attacks on schools and hospitals. I urge FPRC, MPC and UPC, all of which have signed action plans with the United Nations, to comply with their commitments and call upon all parties to adopt concrete measures to cease all grave violations, unconditionally release associated children and respect the civilian character of schools and hospitals.

38. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic ([S/2021/882](#)).

Colombia

39. The United Nations verified 231 grave violations against 192 children (136 boys, 56 girls), including 26 children who were victims of multiple violations.

40. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 123 children (98 boys, 25 girls), between the ages of 12 and 17. Perpetrators were the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups (75), Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (17), Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) (17), unidentified perpetrators (8) and Los Caparrapos (6). Children were used as combatants and in support roles. During their association, 13 children were killed or maimed and three were victims of sexual violence. Most violations occurred in Nariño (16), Chocó and Antioquia (13 each), Norte de Santander and Caquetá (12 each), and Arauca (10).

41. A total of 70 children (45 boys, 25 girls) were killed (31) and maimed (39) by unidentified perpetrators (44), ELN (8), the Colombian armed forces (7), AGC (6) and FARC-EP dissident groups (5) mostly in Cauca (16), Chocó (13), and Antioquia (9). Child casualties resulted from gunshots (31), landmines, improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war (30), air strikes (6) and torture and inhuman treatment (3).

42. Rape and other forms of sexual violence affected 11 girls and the cases were attributed to FARC-EP dissident groups (6), unidentified perpetrators (3), ELN (1) and the Colombian armed forces (1). Most violations (7) occurred in Nariño Department.

43. Nine attacks on schools (6), hospitals (3) and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals were verified and attributed to FARC-EP dissident groups (5), unidentified perpetrators (2), and ELN and Los Caparrapos (1 each). Incidents

involved the killing and abduction of, and threats against, protected personnel, and damage to facilities.

44. Three schools were used by the Colombian armed forces (2) and AGC (1) in Arauca (2) and Chocó (1) Departments. The Colombian armed forces vacated the schools after a few hours.

45. A total of 16 children (11 boys, 5 girls) were abducted by ELN (7), Los Caparrapos (6) and FARC-EP dissident groups (3), mostly for recruitment purposes. Twelve of the children were released.

46. Two incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were verified and attributed to FARC-EP dissident groups and unidentified perpetrators in Arauca and Norte de Santander.

Developments and concerns

47. In January, the Government launched a strategy for the local implementation of the policy to prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children. The programme, entitled “Súmate por mí” (Join Up for Me), continued in 209 municipalities, aimed at preventing child recruitment and use by armed groups. I commend these initiatives and encourage the Government to allocate adequate resources for their implementation, particularly at the local level and in vulnerable areas. I encourage the Government to continue demining and mine risk education activities. I urge the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and to end the military use of schools. I request my Special Representative and the country task force to further engage with the Government so as to support its protection and prevention efforts.

48. I welcome the fact that 180 children (126 boys, 54 girls) who were separated from armed groups entered the protection programme of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute. I also welcome the fact that the Institute is providing training to the Colombian armed forces on child rights.

49. I am concerned by the continued increase in the number of grave violations against children, notably in the cases of recruitment and use and abduction of children by armed groups, particularly by FARC-EP dissident groups and ELN. I urge armed groups to immediately end violations, unconditionally release children and adopt measures to end grave violations. I reiterate my call upon all parties to take all necessary measures to protect children during operations.

50. I urge all parties to end and prevent sexual violence. I commend the Government for investigating and prosecuting perpetrators, including members of the Colombian armed forces, and urge it to continue to do so. I further call upon the Government to ensure that adequate programmes are accessible to all survivors, including child-friendly and safe reporting and response mechanisms.

51. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Colombia ([S/2021/1022](#)).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

52. The United Nations verified 3,546 violations against 2,979 children (2,090 boys, 889 girls). In addition, 790 grave violations against 238 children (162 boys, 76 girls) which occurred prior to 2021 were verified during the reporting period. At least 650 children were victims of multiple violations.

53. The United Nations verified the new recruitment and use of 565 children (487 boys, 78 girls), all of whom were separated in 2021, by Nyatura (120), Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) (101), Mai-Mai Mazembe (80),

the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) (60) and other armed groups (198). Six children were used as spies by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (5) and in hostilities (1). Cases were verified in North Kivu (385), Ituri (105), South Kivu (56), Maniema (13) and Tanganyika (4). Two children were recruited in Burundi and Uganda and trafficked into the Democratic Republic of the Congo for use by the Forces nationales de libération and ADF, respectively. Of the total, 241 children were used in combat and 324 children were used in support roles. In addition, 42 girls were also used for and subjected to sexual violence. Furthermore, the recruitment and use of 128 children (121 boys, 7 girls) by Raia Mutomboki (46), Mai-Mai Mazembe (31), Nyatura (13) and other armed groups (38), which occurred in previous years, were verified in 2021.

54. In addition, 1,298 children (1,168 boys, 130 girls), recruited in previous years, were used until their separation in 2021 by Nyatura (237), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (168), Mai-Mai Mazembe (159), Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (NDC-Rénové) (118), APCLS (106), Mai-Mai Bilonze Bishambuke (57), Raia Mutomboki (50) and 34 other armed groups (403) in North Kivu (773), South Kivu (231), Tanganyika (229), other provinces (63) and in Rwanda (2). Some 714 children were used in combat and 584 children were used in support roles. Two boys and 54 girls were also used for and subjected to sexual violence.

55. The United Nations verified the detention of 160 children (142 boys, 18 girls) by the armed forces (152) and the Congolese National Police (8); 151 children were released.

56. The United Nations verified the killing (285) and maiming (157) of 442 children (272 boys, 170 girls) mostly by armed groups (353): ADF (101), Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) (95), Front patriotique et intégrationniste du Congo (25), Nyatura (22), Twigwaneho (19), unidentified Mai-Mai groups (16), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (15), APCLS (13), and other groups (47). Government forces were responsible for 62 child casualties ((armed forces (52); police (10)). The remaining 27 casualties were attributed to unidentified perpetrators, including 25 resulting from explosive remnants of war. Attacks against civilians (289), crossfire (64) and explosive remnants of war (32) were the main causes of child casualties. In addition, the killing (20) and maiming (12) of 32 children (21 boys, 11 girls) by armed groups (31) and the armed forces (1), which occurred in previous years, were verified in 2021.

57. The United Nations verified that 436 children (7 boys, 429 girls) were subjected to sexual violence, mostly by armed groups (336): Nyatura (85), CODECO (72), Mai-Mai Malaika (42), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (33), APCLS (18), ADF (13), Raia Mutomboki (12), Mai-Mai Mazembe (11) and other armed groups (50). Government forces were responsible for 100 violations (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (82), police (17); National Intelligence Agency (1)). Most of the incidents involved rape (268), gang rape (96) and sexual slavery (47). In addition, cases of sexual violence against 121 children (3 boys, 118 girls) by armed groups (96) and government forces (25) (armed forces (18); police (7)), which occurred in previous years, were verified in 2021.

58. The United Nations verified 112 attacks on schools (69), and hospitals (43) and on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to government forces (40) (armed forces (39); police (1)), CODECO (31), Mai-Mai groups (21), ADF (18) and other armed groups (2). The incidents included destruction (68), looting (37) and attacks against related protected persons (7). In addition, one attack on a hospital by Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale, from a previous year, was verified in 2021.

59. Four schools were used for military purposes by the armed forces.

60. A total of 684 children (416 boys, 268 girls) were abducted by ADF (181), Nyatura (104), APCLS (64), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (55), CODECO (48), other armed groups (217) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (15). The purposes of the abductions included recruitment and use (460) and sexual violence (94). Abductions occurred in North Kivu (308), Ituri (210), South Kivu (83) and other provinces (77), and in neighbouring countries (6). In addition, the abduction of 508 children (434 boys, 74 girls) by Nyatura (118), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (67) and other groups (323), which occurred in previous years, was verified in 2021.

61. Nine incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to CODECO (3), unidentified Mai-Mai groups (2), and to the armed forces, Mai-Mai Malaika, NDC-Rénové and Twigwaneho (1 each). Incidents included threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, abductions, checkpoints and extortion.

Developments and concerns

62. I welcome the commitment of the Government to sustain the gains made in preventing child recruitment and use, including through screening mechanisms. I call upon the Government to pursue those efforts and act to prevent cases of use of children by its armed forces.

63. I further call upon the Government to redouble efforts to end and prevent sexual violence against children, including by its forces, which are responsible for a persistently high number of violations. I reiterate my call upon the Government to implement the 2012 action plan and other commitments to address conflict-related sexual violence and prioritize access to services for survivors.

64. I commend the Government for its efforts to hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable and urge them to continue to do so, including for cases of child recruitment and use, and for cases of sexual violence.

65. I am troubled by the staggeringly high number of violations against children, particularly those committed by armed groups, and amid rising intercommunal violence, hate speech and attacks on civilians. I am concerned by the increase in the number of violations by government forces, particularly the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals, mostly in Ituri and North Kivu Provinces. I urge all parties to cease and prevent violations against children, to protect children during operations and immediately and unconditionally to release children. I call upon the Government to implement the Safe Schools Declaration, which it endorsed in 2016.

66. I call upon the Government to release children detained for alleged association with armed groups and to treat them in line with the 2013 governmental directives and international juvenile justice standards.

67. The signature by six commanders of unilateral commitments to protect children, following United Nations advocacy, and the release of 430 children, are welcomed. I urge groups that have not done so, including ADF, CODECO, and Mai-Mai groups operating in the Hauts Plateaux (South Kivu) to cease violations, immediately and unconditionally release children, and to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent violations.

68. I welcome the new disarmament, demobilization and reintegration community and stabilization programme and urge the Government to give children special consideration in the implementation thereof. I call upon international partners to support and fund reintegration programmes for children separated from armed groups.

Iraq

69. The United Nations verified 288 grave violations against 167 children (131 boys, 32 girls, 4 sex unknown). In addition, 16 grave violations against 16 children (4 boys, 12 girls), which occurred in previous years, were verified in 2021.

70. No cases of the recruitment and use of children were verified during the reporting period. The recruitment and use of one boy by Da'esh (in 2017) was verified in 2021.

71. As at December 2021, 1,267 children (1,251 boys, 16 girls) remained in detention on national security-related charges, for up to five years, including for their actual or alleged association with armed groups, primarily Da'esh.

72. A total of 159 children (127 boys, 28 girls, 4 unknown sex) were killed (72) and maimed (87) by unidentified perpetrators (101), Da'esh (37), Iraqi security forces (12), Operation Claw⁵ (6) and the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (3). The majority of incidents occurred in areas previously under the control of Da'esh. Child casualties resulted from explosive remnants of war (127), ground engagement (24), crossfire (1) and air strikes (7). In addition, the killing of two boys in 2017 by unidentified perpetrators was verified in 2021.

73. Rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against 6 girls by Da'esh in 2014 were verified in 2021.

74. Three attacks on schools (1) and hospitals (2) were verified and attributed to Da'esh (2) and Operation Claw (1). A total of 33 instances of the military use of schools by the Iraqi police (25), PMF (4), the Iraqi army (3) and the Peshmerga (1) were verified in Kirkuk (29), Ninawa (3) and in Salah al-Din (1) Governorates.

75. The United Nations verified the abduction of 8 children (4 boys, 4 girls) by Da'esh. In addition, the abduction of 7 children (1 boy, 6 girls) by Da'esh in 2014 was verified in 2021.

76. A total of 118 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to Iraqi security forces (89), PMF (16), the Iraqi police (10), Operation Claw (1), national security services (1) and to unidentified perpetrators (1).

Developments and concerns

77. I welcome the absence of cases of the recruitment and use of children attributed to PMF and the engagement between the Government and the United Nations to prevent grave violations, and the progress made towards the development of an action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by PMF. I urge the Government to prioritize the adoption and implementation of the action plan. The prompt signature and implementation of the action plan may make PMF eligible for delisting from the annexes to my report on children and armed conflict upon United Nations verification that the terms of the action plan have been fulfilled, including that the violations mentioned therein have ceased, and that measures are in place to prevent their reoccurrence.

78. I am concerned that explosive remnants of war are the leading cause for rising child casualties. I urge the Government to fully implement international legal instruments on mines and explosive remnants of war. I call upon the Government to continue demining, mine risk education and victim assistance, including prior to any movement by internally displaced persons to contaminated areas.

⁵ Launched by Türkiye in northern Iraq in May 2019.

79. I am troubled by the increase in the number of children detained on national security-related charges, including for their actual or alleged association with Da'esh. These children should be treated primarily as victims and in line with international juvenile justice standards. Children should only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest period of time. I call upon the Government to release these children to child protection actors.

80. I welcome the adoption of the Law on Support to Female Yazidi Survivors. I encourage the Government to address the needs of other minorities, of boys and men who are survivors of Da'esh atrocities and of children born of rape.

81. I commend the Government for the repatriation of 336 Iraqi families, including 858 children, from Hawl camp in the Syrian Arab Republic. I welcome the repatriation of 223 children from Iraq to their countries of origin. I reiterate my call upon all countries concerned to facilitate the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of children, in line with the principle of non-refoulement, with respect for family unity and the best interests of the child, and in accordance with international law.

82. I encourage the Government to facilitate the reintegration of all children affected by armed conflict, with the support of the United Nations.

83. I reiterate my recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Iraq ([S/2022/46](#)).

Israel and the State of Palestine⁶

84. The United Nations verified 2,934 grave violations against 1,208 Palestinian children and 9 Israeli children (915 boys, 302 girls) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel.

85. The United Nations verified the recruitment of one Palestinian boy by the Mujahidin Brigades in Gaza. In addition, the recruitment and use of one boy by Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades in 2019 was verified in 2021. In Gaza, Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades, Hamas' Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine Abu Ali Mustafa Brigades and Palestinian Mujahidin Movement Mujahidin Brigades, organized "summer camps" for adults and children as young as 14, exposing them to military content and activities.

86. The United Nations verified the detention of 637 Palestinian children for alleged security offences by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including 557 in East Jerusalem. Among those children, 85 reported ill-treatment and breaches of due process by Israeli forces while in detention, with 75 per cent reporting having experienced physical violence.

87. A total of 88 children (86 Palestinians, 2 Israelis; 64 boys, 24 girls) were killed in Gaza (69), in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (17) and in Israel (2), by Israeli forces (78), Palestinian armed groups (8), unidentified perpetrators and explosive remnants of war (2). All 17 children in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were killed by Israeli forces using live ammunition mainly during demonstrations (9), and in relation to alleged or attempted attacks on Israeli civilians or forces (7). In Gaza, 59 children were killed by air strikes and 1 by live ammunition by Israeli forces during the escalation of hostilities in May, 6 by rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups, one by Israeli forces during a demonstration at the Israel-Gaza perimeter fence, one by explosive remnants of war and one by unidentified

⁶ For the purposes of the present report, the present section provides information on grave violations in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel.

perpetrators. The two Israeli children were killed by rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups.

88. A total of 1,128 children (1,121 Palestinians, 7 Israelis; 850 boys, 278 girls) were maimed in Gaza (661), in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (464) and in Israel (3), by Israeli forces (982), Israeli settlers (28), Palestinian armed groups (46), including Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (18), Palestinian perpetrators (4), and unidentified perpetrators (68), including by explosive remnants of war (10). The main causes of maiming by Israeli forces were shelling and air strikes (539), tear gas inhalation (153), rubber-coated metal bullets (133) and live ammunition (116). Of the children maimed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, 196 were maimed during demonstrations against settlement activities. A total of 43 Palestinian children were maimed by Palestinian armed groups, including Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (18), in Gaza, by rockets fired during the escalation in May (18), as a result of the explosion of stored weapons (23) and as a result of accidents involving children who were near to military training exercises (2). The 7 Israeli children were maimed by rockets fired by Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades, striking Israel (3), and by Palestinian perpetrators during stone-throwing incidents in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (4).

89. The United Nations verified 134 attacks on schools (22) and hospitals (112), including on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals (61), attributed to Israeli forces (128), Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (5) and Palestinian armed groups (1), in Gaza (72), the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (61) and in Israel (1). Incidents involved air strikes (67), attacks on medical personnel (59), the explosion of munitions stored in the vicinity of schools and/or hospitals (5), threats against school personnel (2) and a rocket attack (1). Separately, 156 other interferences with health (54) and education (102) by Israeli forces (152) and Israeli settlers (4) were verified. Most involved Israeli forces firing weapons at health facilities (4), at ambulances and paramedics (45), at or in the vicinity of schools (27) and closures of checkpoints or the denial of teachers' and students' access through checkpoints (45). Of concern, in the context of a subsequent investigation into how to secure a school of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East that had been struck by two Israeli missiles, the existence of a possible tunnel under the school was discovered, for potential use by Palestinian armed groups, with no indication of the existence of any entry or exit points for the tunnel within the premises.

90. The denial of humanitarian access by Israeli forces (1,582) and Palestinian armed groups (1) was verified in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza. Some 38 per cent of permit applications to Israeli authorities for children to exit through the Erez crossing to access specialized medical treatment outside Gaza were delayed or denied, affecting 1,581 applications (933 boys, 648 girls).

Developments and concerns

91. I welcome the collaboration extended by Israeli and Palestinian parties to my Special Representative.

92. I am alarmed by the increase in grave violations against children, particularly the dramatic rise in killing and maiming, including in the context of the escalation of hostilities in May 2021, despite commitments by Israeli and Palestinian parties to implement corrective measures and strengthen protection frameworks following consultations with my Special Representative ([A/75/873-S/2021/437](#)). I urge the Israeli forces and Palestinian armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian and international human rights law, including by ensuring

that operations are conducted in line with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and to immediately correct and reinforce existing measures to ensure the protection of children affected by armed conflict. I reiterate my call upon all parties to continue to engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations, including at the country level, to end and prevent grave violations against children and to better protect children and respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

93. I am shocked by the number of children killed and maimed by Israeli forces during hostilities, in air strikes on densely populated areas and through the use of live ammunition during law enforcement operations, and by the persistent lack of accountability for these violations. I express serious concern regarding the excessive use of force and reiterate that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life and put in place preventive and protective measures to end and prevent any excessive use of force against children. I note the existing procedures, which have been shared with my Special Representative, and I urge Israeli authorities to review and strengthen their procedures to prevent any excessive use of force. I further urge Israel to continue to investigate each case where live ammunition was used, as required by procedure, and to pursue accountability for violations against children. I exhort Israel to better protect schools.

94. I am concerned by the increase in the number of children detained by Israel and by the reports by children of physical violence directed against them during detention. I reiterate my call upon Israel to uphold international juvenile justice standards, including the use of detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, to end the administrative detention of children, and to prevent any violence and ill-treatment in detention.

95. I am concerned by the increase in the killing and maiming of children by Palestinian armed groups and by recurrent incidents of recruitment and use of children. I call upon Palestinian armed groups to cease the recruitment and use of children and to abide by their domestic and international legal obligations. I call upon Palestinian armed groups to cease all indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars from densely populated areas in Gaza towards Israeli civilian population centres. I urge all Palestinian armed groups to protect children, including by preventing them from being exposed to the risk of violence or by abstaining from instrumentalizing them for political purposes.

Lebanon

96. The United Nations verified 55 grave violations against 51 children (45 boys, 6 girls).

97. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 32 boys, between the ages of 11 and 17, by unidentified armed groups (24), Fath al-Islam (3), Hizbullah (2), Jund Ansar Allah (1), Saraya al-Muqawama⁷ (1) and Da'esh (1).

98. Children continued to be arrested and prosecuted under military jurisdiction on national security-related charges, with the verified detention of three boys.

99. A total of 19 children (13 boys, 6 girls) were killed (9) and maimed (10) by unidentified perpetrators as a result of armed clashes (12), cluster munitions or explosive remnants of war (7).

⁷ The Lebanese Resistance Brigades, known in Arabic as Saraya al-Muqawama, is a non-denominational paramilitary group affiliated with Hizbullah.

100. The United Nations verified four attacks on schools by unidentified perpetrators in Palestine refugee camps.

Developments and concerns

101. I reiterate my call upon the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

102. I am concerned about the continued detention of children. I urge the Government to release these children to reintegration actors and treat them primarily as victims. The detention of children should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

103. I am concerned about the increasing recruitment and use of children and call upon armed groups to cease this practice.

104. I am disturbed by continuing armed clashes in Palestine refugee camps and their negative impact on children. I urge the Palestinian National Security Forces to fully apply their Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics in these camps.

Libya

105. The United Nations verified 63 grave violations against 52 children (32 boys, 20 girls).

106. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of one boy by forces affiliated with the former Government of National Accord, which occurred before March 2021.

107. The United Nations verified the detention of 125 children and their mothers, of several nationalities, for their mothers' alleged association with Da'esh, by the Judicial Police, in Judaydah prison (93), by the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, in Mitiga prison (22), and by the Libyan National Army (LNA) and affiliated forces (10) in Kuwayfayah prison. Eighteen of the children were repatriated to their countries of origin.

108. The verified killing (17) and maiming (21) of 38 children (28 boys, 10 girls) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (28), including in crossfire between the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism and the Stability Support Apparatus (1), and LNA and affiliated forces (10), and were mostly caused by explosive remnants of war (20) mortar shelling (6) and landmines (6).

109. Sexual violence was verified as having been perpetrated against seven girls by the Abu Issa Brigade and Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade in control of detention facilities of the Department for Combating Illegal Migration.

110. One attack on a school by unidentified perpetrators was verified in Tripoli.

111. The abduction of six children (3 boys, 3 girls) was attributed to forces affiliated with the former Government of National Accord (1) before March 2021, the Internal Security Agency (4) and unidentified perpetrators (1).

112. Ten denials of humanitarian access were attributed to forces affiliated to the Government of National Unity (1) and unidentified perpetrators (9).

Developments and concerns

113. I welcome the efforts of the Libyan authorities to strengthen the protection of children, in particular the declaration by the Government of National Unity of

25 November 2021.⁸ I welcome the establishment of specialized courts for the prosecution of violence against women and children.

114. I am concerned about the prevalence of killing and maiming of children, in particular by explosive remnants of war. I call upon Libya to become party to international legal instruments on mines and explosive remnants of war. I call upon the Libyan authorities to advance the implementation of the ceasefire agreement with an emphasis on the reintegration of children.

115. I encourage the Libyan authorities to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of women and children actually or allegedly associated with Da'esh and call upon all countries concerned to facilitate their voluntary repatriation and reintegration, in line with the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for the best interests of the child and in accordance with international law.

116. I urge the Libyan authorities to engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations to develop and adopt measures to end and prevent violations against children, particularly the denial of humanitarian access to children.

117. I am appalled by reports of abuse of refugee and migrant children, including torture and sexual violence. I urge the Libyan authorities to immediately end child detention, pursue alternatives to detention and facilitate access by the United Nations and other humanitarian agencies to detention centres and disembarkation points.

Mali

118. The United Nations verified 994 grave violations against 648 children (478 boys, 149 girls, 21 sex unknown), including 22 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 42 grave violations affecting 39 boys and 3 girls that occurred in earlier years were verified in 2021.

119. A total of 352 children (288 boys, 64 girls), some as young as 6, were recruited and used by Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) (151) (Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) (60), Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNL) (57), Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA)-CMA (19) and unidentified CMA (15)); unidentified perpetrators (66); Dozo traditional hunters (48); Platform (47) (Ganda Izo (24), Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad (MSA) of the Dawsahak (13), Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés (GATIA) (7), Ganda Koy (2), and MAA-Platform (1)); Front de libération du Macina (FLM) (16); Jama 'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (10); the Malian armed forces (8); Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad (MSA) of the Chamanamas (3); and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) (3). Children were mostly recruited in Kidal (115), Gao (94), Mopti (61), Ménaka (30) and Timbuktu (27) Regions. Children were used in hostilities (39), in support roles and for sexual violence. In addition, in 2021 the United Nations verified earlier cases of the recruitment and use of 42 children (39 boys, 3 girls) by CMA/MNL (22); Platform (15) (Ganda Izo (7), Ganda Koy (5), MSA of the Dawsahak (3)); and Coalition du peuple de l'Azawad (CPA) (5).

120. Seven boys were arrested by national authorities for their alleged association with armed groups. Five boys remain in detention. In accordance with the handover protocol signed in 2013 by the Government of Mali and the United Nations, 10 children captured during military operations were transferred to civilian child protection services.

121. A total of 201 children (132 boys, 56 girls, 13 sex unknown) were killed (73) and maimed (128) by unidentified perpetrators (142), ISGS (40), the Malian armed

⁸ Available at www.genevacall.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Signed-Libya-event-statement_EN1.pdf.

forces (12), Operation Barkhane (2), Ganda Izo (2), FLM (2) and JNIM (1). Most child casualties resulted from gunshot wounds during attacks on villages and improvised explosive devices or explosive remnants of war (40), and most of them occurred in Gao (79) and Mopti (70) Regions.

122. Sexual violence affected 35 girls, in cases attributed to unidentified perpetrators (30), the Malian armed forces (4) and JNIM (1). Violations occurred mostly in Gao (15) and Mopti (10) Regions and involved rape (17), forced marriage (15), sexual assault (2) and attempted rape (1). No perpetrators were arrested.

123. The United Nations verified 153 attacks on schools (120), hospitals (33) and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals attributed to unidentified perpetrators (135), JNIM (9), FLM (6), ISGS (2) and Dan Nan Ambassagou (DNA) (1). Incidents involved the abduction of and threats against related protected persons, the destruction and burning of facilities and looting. They occurred mostly in Mopti (60), Ségou (45) and Timbuktu (32) Regions.

124. One school has been used for over two years by Dozo traditional hunters in Mopti Region.

125. Some 94 children (67 boys, 19 girls, 8 sex unknown) were abducted by unidentified perpetrators (76), DNA (8), FLM (6), ISGS (3) and MAA (1), including for forced marriage (12), intelligence gathering (9), recruitment and use (6), as a result of accusations of treason (3) and for sexual violence (1). Most incidents occurred in Gao (41) and Mopti (36) Regions. One child was killed, 5 escaped and 44 were released.

126. The United Nations verified 159 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access by unidentified perpetrators (155) and JNIM (4), mostly in Mopti (71), Gao (30), Timbuktu (21) and Ségou (14) Regions. Incidents involved violence and threats against humanitarian personnel, including killing, abduction, carjacking and robbery.

Developments and concerns

127. I welcome the engagement of the transitional Government with the United Nations to establish a framework between the Malian armed forces and the United Nations to address grave violations against children by armed forces and I call for its endorsement and implementation, including by notifying the United Nations of children associated with the Malian armed forces and releasing them. I call upon the transitional Government to finalize the revision of the Child Protection Code, criminalizing the recruitment and use of children, including those between the ages of 15 and 17, and to work with the United Nations to develop a national prevention strategy on grave violations against children. I request my Special Representative and the country task force to further engage with the transitional Government.

128. I welcome advances in the implementation of the Safe Schools Declaration and in revising the bill on the protection of education from attacks. I call for its adoption and implementation.

129. I welcome the signature by two Platform factions on 26 August of action plans to end and prevent child recruitment and use. Furthermore, CMA and the United Nations organized two workshops to accelerate the implementation of the 2017 action plan. I remain concerned by the continued recruitment and use of children by CMA and Platform and I call upon these parties to prevent further recruitment and use and implement their action plans with United Nations support.

130. I remain alarmed at the elevated number of grave violations against children, notably the sharp increase in attacks on schools. I urge all parties to immediately cease all violations, unconditionally release associated children, protect schools and

hospitals and allow the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors to affected populations.

Myanmar

131. The United Nations verified 503 grave violations against 462 children (390 boys, 69 girls, 3 sex unknown). In addition, an earlier violation against one child was verified in 2021. The monitoring and reporting mechanism faced serious safety, security and access challenges following the military takeover on 1 February 2021.

132. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 280 children (260 boys, 20 girls), some as young as 12, attributed to the Tatmadaw (222), Kachin Independence Army (KIA) (50), Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army — South (RCSS/SSA-South) (6), Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (SSPP/SSA) (1) and the Arakan Army (AA) (1), in Rakhine (203), Kachin (40), Shan (16), Mon (13) Chin (2), Kayah (1), Magway (1), Mandalay (1), Sagaing (1), Taninthayi (1) states and regions and in Yangon (1). A total of 13 children (10 boys, 3 girls) were released by KIA, following advocacy by the United Nations, civil society or their parents.

133. The United Nations verified the detention of 87 children (75 boys, 12 girls) by the police and the Tatmadaw for their alleged association with armed groups. In addition, a boy who had been detained by the Tatmadaw since September 2020 was released in 2021.

134. The United Nations verified the killing (65) and maiming (104) of 169 children (119 boys, 47 girls, 3 sex unknown), which were attributed to the Tatmadaw (75), Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) (2), Pyu Saw Htee (1) and KIA (1), as well as unidentified perpetrators (90), including as a result of explosive remnants of war (29), improvised explosive devices (21), landmines (17) and crossfire (16), in Shan (41), Rakhine (23), Chin (22), Sagaing (18), Kachin (16), Magway (14), Kayah (12), Kayin (10), Mon (9) and Taninthayi (4) states and regions. In addition, the maiming of one girl by the Tatmadaw in 2020 was verified in 2021.

135. The United Nations verified the rape of one girl by the Tatmadaw.

136. The United Nations verified 27 attacks on schools (14) and hospitals (13), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to the Tatmadaw (17) and unidentified perpetrators (10), including crossfire between RCSS/SSA-South, Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) and SSPP/SSA (1) in Kayin (7), Shan (7), Kayah (6), Kachin (4), Mon (2) and Chin (1) States.

137. The United Nations verified the military use of 53 schools (51) and hospitals (2) by the Tatmadaw (52) and AA (1) in Rakhine (31), Kayah (7), Kayin (6), Chin (6) and Kachin (3) States.

138. The abduction of 24 children (22 boys, 2 girls) by the Tatmadaw (10), AA (5), KIA (4), SSPP/SSA (3) and RCSS/SSA-South (2), in Shan (7), Rakhine (5), Kachin (4), Kayah (4), Chin (2), Mon (1) States and in Taninthayi (1) was verified by the United Nations.

139. Two incidents of the denial of humanitarian access by the Tatmadaw in Shan State (2) were verified by the United Nations. Administrative impediments, security threats, control and restrictions of passage severely affected the delivery of humanitarian assistance to children. The expansion of armed conflict in new areas and the intensification of clashes in both the north-west and south-east regions increased humanitarian needs.

Developments and concerns

140. I note the intention of the Tatmadaw to continue implementing the 2012 joint action plan on the recruitment and use of children, but I am extremely concerned by the continued high number of children used, predominantly in Rakhine. I call upon the Tatmadaw to implement all activities of the joint action plan, in close cooperation with the United Nations, in order to immediately cease the use of children and prevent their recruitment and use.

141. I am gravely concerned by the surge in the number of attacks targeting children, and I strongly urge the Tatmadaw to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. I reiterate my call upon the Tatmadaw to sign a joint action plan with the United Nations to end and prevent the killing and maiming of children and the perpetration of sexual violence against children.

142. I welcome the implementation of the joint action plan on the recruitment and use of children by the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA). I welcome the engagement between KIA and the United Nations, leading to the release of 13 children.

143. I note that the National Unity Government⁹ reported the development of guidelines and awareness-raising regarding the prevention of grave violations against children.

144. I strongly condemn the violations against children resulting from the military takeover by the Tatmadaw, including the killing and maiming of children, as well as the attacks on and the use of schools and hospitals. I am alarmed by the spread of clashes in new areas, and by the multiplication of the number of armed groups.

145. I condemn the ongoing grave violations and the increase in abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals by all parties to the conflict, and the increase in the military use of schools and hospitals. I remain concerned by casualties caused by explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and landmines. I call upon all parties and those with influence over parties to end and prevent these violations. I reiterate my call for the accountability of perpetrators.

146. I am concerned by the increase in the number of cases of detention of children, and their being denied due process, as well as cases of torture and mistreatment of children. I call for the implementation of the 2019 Child Rights Law, and I urge the Tatmadaw to immediately release detained children and recall that children should be treated primarily as victims. Children should only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

147. I am concerned by the severe and increased restrictions to humanitarian access and call upon the Tatmadaw, as well as all other parties, to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to children.

Somalia

148. The United Nations verified 3,340 grave violations against 2,687 children (2,041 boys, 646 girls), including 604 children who were victims of multiple violations.

149. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 1,161 children (1,116 boys, 45 girls) by Al-Shabaab (854); government security forces (138) (Somali Police

⁹ National League for Democracy parliamentarians who had won seats in the 2020 elections established the Committee Representing Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, which then formed the National Unity Government opposing the military (A/HRC/49/72, para. 4).

Force (75), Somali National Army (60) and National Intelligence and Security Agency (3)); regional forces (73) (Puntland forces (26), Jubbaland forces (21), Galmudug forces (14), Galmudug police (5), Jubbaland police (2), “Somaliland” forces (2), Hirshabelle police (2) and Puntland police (1)); clan militia (63) and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama‘a (33). Children were used in support roles (176), in combat (69) or for unknown purposes (916).

150. A total of 195 children (192 boys, 3 girls) were detained for their alleged association with armed groups by the Somali Police Force (101), the Somali National Army (35), Jubbaland forces (20), Jubbaland police (9), Galmudug police (9), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (7), Puntland forces (6), Puntland police (6) and Galmudug forces (2).

151. The killing (200) and maiming (593) of 793 children (573 boys, 220 girls) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (335); Al-Shabaab (256); government security forces (92) (Somali National Army (54) and Somali Police Force (38)); clan militia (58); regional forces (48) (Puntland police (14), Jubbaland forces (11), Jubbaland police (8), Puntland forces (8), Galmudug forces (4), Galmudug police (1), Hirshabelle police (1) and “Somaliland” police (1)); Da’esh (3); and Westland militia (1). The two main causes of casualties were crossfire between armed forces and groups (263) and explosive devices, including improvised explosive devices, mines and explosive remnants of war (187).

152. Responsibility for the perpetration of sexual violence against 307 children (1 boy, 306 girls) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (205); Al-Shabaab (50), government security forces (26) (Somali National Army (18) and Somali Police Force (8)); clan militia (18); and regional forces (8) (Puntland police (3), Puntland forces (2), Jubbaland police (2) and Galmudug police (1)). Violations included rape (187), attempted rape (66) and forced marriage (42). Eleven cases were resolved traditionally, 13 perpetrators were arrested, while 283 perpetrators remained at large.

153. The United Nations verified 33 attacks on schools (30) and hospitals (3), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, by Al-Shabaab (30), the Somali Police Force (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1). Most incidents (25) involved the abduction of teachers and students.

154. A total of 1,030 children (933 boys, 97 girls) were abducted by Al-Shabaab (1,012), clan militia (5) and unidentified perpetrators (13). Most children were abducted for recruitment and use (532), owing to alleged association with armed forces (104) and as a result of non-compliance with codes imposed by Al-Shabaab (131). Some were released (123) or escaped (35).

155. The United Nations verified 16 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access by clan militia (8), Al-Shabaab (5), the Somali National Army (1) and unidentified perpetrators (2).

Developments and concerns

156. I welcome the Government’s efforts to implement the 2012 action plans on ending and preventing the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children and the 2019 road map, including at the federal member state level. The establishment of working groups on children and armed conflict at the federal member state level is a positive development and I recommend expanding these to all states. I urge the Government to strengthen and expedite the implementation of its commitments to combat conflict-related sexual violence

157. I reiterate my call upon the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, fast-track the

endorsement of the child rights bill, endorse the juvenile justice bill and age verification guidelines, and adopt the sexual offences bill of 2018. I underline that all legislation pertaining to children and sexual violence should be in line with Somalia's human rights commitments and meet international and regional standards.

158. I am concerned by the continuing high number of children in detention. I urge the Government to immediately release these children and to treat them primarily as victims. Children should only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time. I urge the Government to apply the standard operating procedures for the reception and handover of children separated from armed groups to child protection actors, endorsed in 2014.

159. I am concerned about clashes between Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a and security forces in Galmudug and call upon the group to cease child recruitment and use. I reiterate my call upon the Government to provide information on the integration of Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a into the Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces and enable the United Nations to conduct screening exercises.

160. I am alarmed by the staggering numbers of grave violations committed by all parties to conflict, the majority of which were committed by Al-Shabaab. I call upon all parties to immediately cease and prevent violations and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

161. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)).

South Sudan

162. The United Nations verified 196 grave violations against 183 children (148 boys, 35 girls), including two girls who were victims of multiple violations. Violations occurred in Jonglei (51), Central Equatoria (40), Western Equatoria (35), Lakes (20), Western Bahr el-Ghazal (17), Northern Bahr el-Ghazal (13), Unity (10), Upper Nile (9), and Eastern Equatoria (1) States.

163. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 129 children (124 boys, 5 girls), with 30 per cent of the children recruited under the age of 15, by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces (69), forces loyal to General James Nando (20), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar (SPLA-IO) (14), the South Sudan National Police Service (12), forces loyal to General Moses Lokujo (9), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) (4) and the National Salvation Front (NAS) (1). Children were used as combatants, bodyguards and cooks.

164. The killing (12) and maiming (25) of 37 children (21 boys, 16 girls) was perpetrated by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (35), including resulting from explosive remnants of war (27) and crossfire between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and NAS (2), SPLA-IO and armed youths (3) and forces loyal to General James Nando and armed youths (1).

165. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated against 9 girls by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (2), SPLA-IO (6) and NAS (1). In addition, in 2021, the United Nations verified three girls as survivors of sexual violence perpetrated by SPLA-IO prior to 2021.

166. Four attacks on hospitals were attributed to NAS (1) and unidentified perpetrators (3). In addition, the military use of 9 schools and 2 hospitals by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (10) and SPLA-IO (1) was verified.

167. A total of 11 children (3 boys, 8 girls) were abducted by the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (1), SPLA-IO (5) and NAS (5).

168. Six incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified perpetrators.

Developments and concerns

169. I welcome steps towards the implementation of the 2020 comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all grave violations against children and reiterate my call for the expedited implementation of the action plan and for the Government to budget for this accordingly. I underline the importance of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, including its provisions relating to children.

170. I urge the Government to combat the prevalent impunity for grave violations and to hold perpetrators accountable, including through the designation of a focal point on children and armed conflict in the Ministry of Justice.

171. I encourage the continued cooperation of parties to conflict with the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. I reiterate the need for child-sensitive disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, for coordinated mine action and for gender-sensitive and survivor-centred reintegration and assistance programmes, including for survivors of sexual violence. I call upon the international community to step up its support in this regard.

172. I welcome the increased access to barracks provided by the Government to the United Nations for age screening exercises, but I remain concerned by the number of children recruited and used, particularly by Government security forces. I call upon the Government and other parties to immediately cease and prevent all violations, to facilitate humanitarian assistance and protect humanitarian personnel, and to release associated children.

173. I am concerned about escalating subnational violence and the impact of climate change across South Sudan, and I request my Special Representative to analyse the impact of these conflict dynamics on children.

Sudan

174. The United Nations verified 202 grave violations against 195 children (137 boys, 57 girls, 1 sex unknown) in the Sudan,¹⁰ including one girl who was the victim of multiple violations. In addition, 8 violations against 4 children (2 boys, 2 girls) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

175. A total of 11 children (8 boys, 3 girls), some as young as 11, were verified as having been recruited and used by the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Transitional Council (SLM/A-TC) (8), the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid splinter group led by Ali Hamid “Shakush” (2) and the Sudanese Alliance (1) in Central Darfur (10) and West Darfur (1). The earlier recruitment of one girl by the Justice and Equality Movement was verified in 2021.

176. The killing (54) and maiming (112) of 166 children (128 boys, 37 girls, 1 sex unknown) was attributed to government security forces (27) (Sudanese Armed Forces (26) and Rapid Support Forces (1)); and unidentified perpetrators (139), including due to crossfire between the Sudanese Armed Forces and armed groups, intercommunal violence (83) and explosive remnants of war (41). The maiming of 2 boys by unidentified perpetrators, which occurred prior to 2021, was verified in 2021.

¹⁰ Following the deployment of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in the Sudan (UNITAMS), pursuant to Security Council resolution 2524 (2020), and a reconfiguration of the country taskforce on monitoring and reporting, reporting on children and armed conflict in the Sudan now follows a whole-of-country approach.

177. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated against 17 children (1 boy, 16 girls), with responsibility attributed to government security forces (3) (Sudan Police Force (2) and Sudanese Armed Forces (1)); and unidentified perpetrators (14) in North Darfur (11), South Darfur (4), West Darfur (1) and Central Darfur (1). The incidents included gang rape (2), rape (13) and attempted rape (2). Sexual violence perpetrated against one girl by the Sudan Police Force prior to 2021 was verified in 2021.

178. Two attacks on schools (1) and hospitals (1) in South Kordofan and East Darfur were attributed to unidentified perpetrators. In addition, four attacks on schools by the Sudanese Armed Forces, which occurred in previous years, were verified in 2021.

179. The military use of three schools by the Sudanese Armed Forces in West Darfur (2) and South Darfur (1) was verified.

180. The United Nations verified the abduction for sexual violence of one girl by the Sudanese Armed Forces (1) in North Darfur.

181. Five incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (1), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction (1), and unidentified perpetrators (3) in East Darfur (2), Central Darfur (1), North Darfur (1) and Blue Nile (1).

Developments and concerns

182. I welcome the collaboration between the transitional authorities and the United Nations to strengthen the protection of children, resulting in the joint commitment by the transitional authorities and signatories to the Juba Agreement for Peace in the Sudan to a road map based on the 2016 action plan on ending and preventing child recruitment and use, and I call for the endorsement of the road map.

183. I reiterate my call upon the transitional authorities to engage with the United Nations on a longer-term national prevention plan to prevent all grave violations and sustain the gains of the 2016 action plan. I welcome the use of child rights and human rights units within the government security forces to address grave violations. I encourage the Juba Peace Agreement signatories to ensure their child protection focal points are embedded in these units. I encourage the transitional Government to continue to engage with the United Nations on ending and preventing grave violations within the framework of the Darfur Permanent Ceasefire Committee.

184. I am concerned about the stalled implementation of the Juba Peace Agreement, uncertainties surrounding the Sudanese transition following the military coup of 25 October 2021, rising intercommunal tensions in the Sudan, particularly in Darfur, and ongoing access restrictions to conflict-affected areas. I urge all parties to conflict to enable unhindered and safe access for the United Nations and humanitarian partners to conflict-affected populations.

185. I call upon the transitional authorities and security forces to refrain from the excessive use of force against children and to cease the military use of schools and hospitals. I urge the transitional Government to investigate all allegations of violations, including in the context of civil unrest, and to hold perpetrators accountable.

186. I am concerned about ongoing violations, particularly the killing and maiming of children and the perpetration of sexual violence against them. I call upon all parties to cease and prevent all grave violations against children. I urge the transitional authorities to ensure the safety of and access for mine action operations. I urge all parties to release associated children and hand them over to reintegration actors in accordance with the national framework on children affected by armed conflict.

187. I urge the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid, including all its factions, to engage with the United Nations in order to sign an action plan, and call upon the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu and Malik Agar factions to fully implement their respective action plans and other child protection commitments, including under the 2021 road map.

Syrian Arab Republic

188. The United Nations verified 2,271 grave violations against 2,202 children (1,824 boys, 235 girls, 143 sex unknown). In addition, 74 grave violations against 73 children (58 boys, 14 girls, 1 sex unknown) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

189. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 1,296 children (1,258 boys, 38 girls) by the opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) (569) (Faylaq al-Sham (103), Hamzah Division (48), Ahrar al-Sham (41), Suqur al-Sham (38), Jabhah al-Sharqiyah (23), Sultan Murad Brigade (19), Jabhah al-Shamiyah (16), Jabhah al-Islamiyah (16), Jaysh al-Nusrah (8), Jaysh al-Sharqiyah (7), Samarqand Brigade (5), Dir' al-Furat (4), Hizb al-Turkmani (2), Mu'tasim Brigade (2), Ahrar al-Sharqiyah (1), Jaysh al-Sunnah (1), unidentified factions (235)); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (380); the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) (221) (the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) (220) and other components of SDF (1)), Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (46); pro-government militias, including the National Defence Forces (NDF) (35); the Internal Security Forces under the authority of the self-administration in northern and eastern Syria (24) (the Internal Security Forces); the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (10); Nur al-Din al-Zanki (5); Afrin Liberation Forces (2); and unidentified perpetrators (4). Cases were verified mainly in Idlib (591) and Aleppo (401). Most of the children (1,285) were used in combat. In addition, the recruitment and use of 5 children (4 boys, 1 girl) by YPG/YPJ that occurred prior to 2021 were verified in 2021.

190. The deprivation of liberty of 62 children (11 boys, 1 girl, 50 sex unknown) was verified and attributed to the Internal Security Forces (43), SDF (9), Syrian government forces (5), NDF (3), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1) and opposition SNA (1). At the end of 2021, over 800 children, including foreigners, reportedly remained in detention for alleged association with Da'esh in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, over 53,000 women and children with suspected family ties to Da'esh and from an estimated 50 countries of origin continued to be held in the Hawl and Rawj camps in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic at the end of 2021.

191. The United Nations verified the killing (424) and maiming (474) of 898 children (564 boys, 191 girls, 143 sex unknown) attributed to Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (301) (including pro-government air forces (86)); SDF (55) (YPG/YPJ (26) and other components of SDF (29)), Da'esh (25); opposition SNA (20); Afrin Liberation Forces (17); border area fire from Türkiye (4) and Turkish armed forces operations in support of opposition SNA (2); Internal Security Forces (2); the international counter-Da'esh coalition (1); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1); Youth of Aleppo al-Shahba' Squadron for Special Tasks (1); and unidentified perpetrators (469). Casualties resulted mainly from explosive remnants of war (297), shelling (290), attacks with the use of improvised explosive devices (173), and air strikes (98). Most incidents occurred in Aleppo (291) and Idlib (290). In addition, the killing (24) and maiming (39) of 63 children (54 boys, 8 girls, 1 sex unknown) that occurred in previous years and were attributed to pro-government air forces (4), Internal Security Forces (1) and unidentified perpetrators (58) were verified in 2021.

192. Sexual violence against 4 girls trafficked in 2014 from Iraq by Da'esh was verified in 2021.

193. The United Nations verified 45 attacks on schools (28) and hospitals (17), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (23), including pro-government air forces (3); SDF (8); the Internal Security Forces (3); opposition SNA (3); Afrin Liberation Forces (1); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1); and unidentified perpetrators (6). Most attacks occurred in Idlib (18), Dar'a (9) and Aleppo (8) and resulted from shelling (20), assault on or the arrest of protected persons (12), air strikes (3) and raids (3). In addition, an earlier attack on a hospital by pro-government air forces was verified in 2021.

194. The military use of 20 schools (17) and hospitals (3) was attributed to YPG/YPJ (12), the Internal Security Forces (3), NDF (2), Syrian government forces (1), and opposition SNA (2).

195. The United Nations verified the abduction of 8 children (2 boys, 6 girls) by the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (3) and unidentified perpetrators (5). In addition, the earlier abduction of one girl by Da'esh was verified in 2021.

196. A total of 24 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were verified and attributed to Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (5), including pro-government air forces (2); Internal Security Forces (4); Da'esh (3); SDF (2); opposition SNA (2); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (2); Afrin Liberation Forces (1); and unidentified perpetrators (5). Incidents included attacks (15), the denial of humanitarian services or disruption to water facilities (7) and the encirclement of areas (2).

Developments and concerns

197. I welcome the dialogue between the Government and the United Nations on measures to end and prevent grave violations against children, the reactivation of the interministerial committee, and the organization of a joint workshop on child protection on 14 March 2022. I note the issuance of law No. 21/2021 on the rights and protections afforded to children and the commitment reaffirmed by the Government to support the humanitarian response by the United Nations and its partners. I urge the Government to increase its engagement with the United Nations, and with my Special Representative, to strengthen the protection of children, including through the signature of concrete time-bound commitments, and I welcome the ongoing development of a draft comprehensive action plan.

198. I note the continuing progress in the implementation of the 2019 action plan by SDF, resulting in the disengagement of a further 182 children from their ranks and the screening out of 568 boys through age assessment procedures. I also note the adoption by SDF of new guidelines for the release and exclusion of children from their ranks, and procedures for protecting children detained for alleged association with Da'esh. The disciplinary measures against SDF personnel who violate the commitments under the action plan are a positive development. However, I remain concerned by the increased number of verified cases of recruitment and use by SDF and I urge SDF to immediately end all violations.

199. I note the engagement between factions of the opposition SNA and the United Nations, including an exchange of letters aiming at the development of an action plan, and the fact that the opposition SNA issued a statement in September 2021 on measures to comply with international humanitarian law to protect children, including the prohibition of child recruitment and use. I urge the opposition SNA to scale up its

engagement with the United Nations to end and prevent grave violations and to adopt an action plan.

200. I remain alarmed by the deprivation of liberty of children for their alleged association with parties to conflict. I welcome the access provided by SDF for United Nations partners to visit two detention facilities in Aleppo Governorate and I call upon other parties in the Syrian Arab Republic to also facilitate United Nations access to children deprived of liberty. I reiterate my call to treat children primarily as victims, and that deprivation of liberty should be a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and in line with international juvenile justice standards and the best interest of the child.

201. I remain seriously concerned by the humanitarian situation of women and children in the Hawl and Rawj camps and in places of detention in the north-east. I reiterate my call upon all concerned countries of origin and relevant authorities inside the Syrian Arab Republic to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of women and children who are currently in these camps, including those with suspected family ties to Da'esh, in line with international law and in full respect for the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for family unity and the best interest of the child, and in line with the Global Framework on United Nations Support to Member States on Individuals Returned from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq, adopted in 2020.

202. I am appalled by the persistently high number of violations against children committed by all parties to the conflict, particularly the significant increase in child recruitment and use, and by the continued high number of cases of killing and maiming and of attacks on schools and hospitals, and by widespread impunity. I urge all parties to end and prevent grave violations and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

203. I call upon the Syrian Arab Republic to become a party to international legal instruments on mines and explosive remnants of war.

204. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic ([S/2021/398](#)).

Yemen

205. The United Nations verified 2,748 grave violations against 800 children (652 boys, 148 girls), with 99 of those children being victims of multiple violations. In addition, 209 grave violations against 164 children (120 boys, 44 girls) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

206. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 174 children (172 boys, 2 girls), between the ages of 9 and 17, by the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) (hereafter "the Houthis") (131), the Yemen Armed Forces (28), the Security Belt Forces (6), pro-government militias (4), unidentified perpetrators (4) and Islamic State in Yemen (1). Most children (128) served in combat roles. In addition, the recruitment and use of 51 boys by the Houthis (37), the Yemen Armed Forces (12), the Security Belt Forces (1) and Islamic State in Yemen (1) in previous years was verified in 2021.

207. The deprivation of liberty of 10 boys for their alleged association with parties to conflict was verified and attributed to Yemen Armed Forces (5) and the Houthis (5).

208. The United Nations verified the killing (201) and maiming (480) of 681 children (546 boys, 135 girls) attributed to unidentified perpetrators (280), including in crossfire (83), mainly between the Houthis and the Yemen Armed Forces (63) and between other parties (20); the Houthis (180), the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in

Yemen (the Coalition) (100), the Yemen Armed Forces (74), the Security Belt Forces (42), Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (3), Islamic State in Yemen (1) and the Hadrami Elite Forces (1). The main causes of child casualties were explosive remnants of war (181), gunshots and crossfire (176), mortar and artillery shelling (172), air strikes (83) and children being run over by military vehicles (68). Most casualties occurred in Ta'izz (137), Ma'rib (132) and Hudaydah (107) Governorates. In addition, the killing (50) and maiming (96) of 146 children (106 boys, 40 girls) that occurred in previous years was verified in 2021 and attributed to the Houthis (46), the Coalition (22), Yemen Armed Forces (21), the Security Belt Forces (5), Da'esh (3), Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (1) and unidentified perpetrators (48).

209. Sexual violence perpetrated against 11 children (6 boys, 5 girls) was attributed to the Houthis (5), unidentified perpetrators (3), the Yemen Armed Forces (2), and jointly to the Security Belt Forces and the Yemen Armed Forces (1). In addition, sexual violence affecting 7 children (3 boys, 4 girls), in cases which occurred in previous years and were attributed to the Houthis (6) and Yemen Armed Forces (1), was verified in 2021.

210. There were 34 verified attacks on schools (18) and hospitals (16), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to the Houthis (15), the Security Belt Forces (7), the Yemen Armed Forces (6), the Coalition (5) and unidentified perpetrators (1). In addition, two attacks on hospitals by the Houthis (1) and the Security Belt Forces (1) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

211. The military use of 53 schools (49) and hospitals (4) was verified and attributed to the Houthis (46), the Yemen Armed Forces (4) and the Security Belt Forces (3).

212. A total of 35 children (27 boys, 8 girls) were abducted by the Houthis (11), the Security Belt Forces (10), Salafists (3), the Yemen Armed Forces (3), Hadrami Elite Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (6). The purposes of the abductions were for recruitment and use (2), sexual violence (2) and unknown purposes (31). The abduction of three boys in earlier years was verified in 2021 and attributed to the Houthis (2) and the Yemen Armed Forces (1).

213. A total of 1,813 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were verified and attributed to the Houthis (1,448), the Yemen Armed Forces (331) and unidentified perpetrators (34). Incidents included attacks, in-country movement restrictions and interference in the implementation of humanitarian activities. Incidents were prevalent in the Governorates of Amanat Al-Asimah (595), Sa'dah (331) and Aden (306).

Developments and concerns

214. I welcome the continued commitment of the Government, through the identification of priority activities, to implementing the 2014 action plan and the 2018 road map to end and prevent child recruitment and use. I further welcome the resumption of the interministerial committee activities and the organization of training sessions on child protection. I note the significant decrease in the number of verified cases of child recruitment and use by, and the decrease in the number of child casualties caused by, the Yemen Armed Forces, as well as efforts by the Government to facilitate humanitarian access. I encourage the Government to continue to strengthen the measures in place to prevent child casualties during military operations and implement measures to prevent violations. I note Government efforts to reintegrate children formerly associated with armed forces and armed groups and the recent roll-out of the Act to Protect Children Affected by Conflict campaign in Aden. I call upon the Government to adopt a handover protocol on the release of children.

215. I welcome the continued engagement of the Coalition with my Special Representative to sustainably end and prevent grave violations against children and the progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of time-bound activities endorsed in January 2020. I note the continued decrease in the number of child casualties, and I call upon the Coalition to pursue and deepen the implementation of the 2019 memorandum of understanding and the related programme of time-bound activities. I urge the Coalition to swiftly investigate all incidents involving child casualties and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law. I also urge the Coalition to expedite justice, accountability and redress to child victims and their families. Continuous monitoring and engagement to ensure the sustained implementation of agreed activities and further reductions in the number of affected children, as verified by the United Nations, is expected and will be closely observed.

216. I welcome the signature of an action plan by the Houthis with the United Nations on 18 April 2022 to end and prevent the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children, as well as attacks on schools and hospitals and other grave violations. I urge the Houthis to implement all the activities of the action plan, including releasing all children from their ranks, and to immediately end and prevent violations. I call upon the Houthis to continue the implementation of the handover protocol of April 2020 and to allow unimpeded access for the United Nations to all places of detention.

217. I am alarmed by the high number of children killed and maimed, especially by explosive remnants of war, by the number of cases of denial of humanitarian access and by the number of cases of the recruitment and use of children and of the military use of schools and hospitals, particularly by the Houthis. I urge the Houthis and all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to children across the country. I urge all parties to step up the clearance of mines and explosive remnants of war, as well as and mine risk education.

218. I call upon parties to put an end to the fighting and engage with my Special Envoy for Yemen towards the resumption of an inclusive political process to reach a comprehensive negotiated settlement. I also call upon them to include child protection concerns in the peace process.

219. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Yemen ([S/2021/761](#)).

B. Situations not on the agenda of the Security Council or other situations

Burkina Faso

220. The United Nations verified 653 grave violations against 509 children (230 boys, 235 girls, 44 sex unknown).

221. Some 68 children (62 boys, 6 girls), some as young as 6, were recruited and used by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (59), unidentified perpetrators (7) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) (2), mostly in the Sahel (22) and North (21) Regions. Most children (48) were used as combatants.

222. A total of 18 boys were detained in the high security prison of Ouagadougou for their alleged association with armed groups, including three who have been in detention since 2018. Three children were released in 2021.

223. The United Nations verified the killing (99) and maiming (128) of 227 children (91 boys, 92 girls, 44 sex unknown) by JNIM (113); unidentified perpetrators (58), including 11 in crossfire between the Defence and Security Forces and JNIM; ISGS (48); the Defence and Security Forces (4) and *Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie* (4). Casualties resulted mainly from gunshots and physical assault (95 each) and improvised explosive devices (15). Most violations occurred in the Sahel (121) and Centre-Nord (85) Regions.

224. The United Nations verified rape and other forms of sexual violence against nine girls by unidentified perpetrators (5), JNIM (3) and ISGS (1).

225. There were 85 verified attacks on schools (46) and hospitals (39), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to ISGS (37); JNIM (37); unidentified perpetrators (10), including four in crossfire between the Defence and Security Forces and JNIM; and the Defence and Security Forces (1), mostly in the East (58) Region. Incidents involved the abduction and killing of related protected persons, threats directed against protected persons, and the destruction, looting and forced closure of schools.

226. Two schools and one hospital were used for military purposes by the Defence and Security Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1).

227. A total of 250 children (88 boys, 159 girls, 3 sex unknown) were abducted by JNIM (187), mostly as punishment for not adhering to JNIM norms, by unidentified perpetrators (55) and ISGS (8). Most violations occurred in the Centre-Nord (177) and Sahel (66) Regions. Among those abducted, 238 children were subsequently released.

228. Seventeen incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to JNIM (8), ISGS (7) and unidentified perpetrators (2) in the Sahel (10), East (4) and North (3) Regions. Incidents included threats and violence directed at humanitarians, the abduction of humanitarians, as well as looting.

Developments and concerns

229. I welcome the fact that the Government progressed with the validation of a handover protocol for the transfer of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors. I call upon the authorities to endorse and implement the protocol, to treat children associated with armed groups primarily as victims and to release all children in its custody.

230. I am deeply troubled by the sharp increase in grave violations. I am alarmed by the scale of abductions, particularly of girls, and by the recruitment and use of children, with JNIM as the main perpetrator. I urge JNIM and other parties to cease all violations and release associated children.

231. I call upon parties to immediately cease the killing and maiming of children and take necessary measures to protect children during operations, and to cease and prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and on protected persons and prevent their military use. I call upon all parties to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent violations and further urge the authorities, including *Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie*, to prevent grave violations committed during security operations and to pursue accountability.

Cameroon

232. The United Nations verified 174 grave violations against 129 children (62 boys, 57 girls, 10 sex unknown) in the Far North (94), North-West (45) and South-West (35) Regions, including 7 children who were victims of multiple violations.

233. Three boys, some as young as 10, were recruited and used by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups as spies and to run errands in the Far North Region.

234. Five children (2 boys, 3 girls) were detained in Far North by the Cameroon Armed Forces for their alleged association with armed groups and remained in detention as at December 2021.

235. A total of 75 children (48 boys, 25 girls, 2 sex unknown) were killed (44) and maimed (31) by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (50), including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (25) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (2); the Cameroon Armed Forces (14) and unidentified perpetrators (11), including in crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces (4). Casualties occurred in the Far North (49), South-West (14) and North-West (12) regions and resulted mainly from gunshots (55) and improvised explosive devices or explosive remnants of war (16).

236. Sexual violence perpetrated against one girl by unidentified perpetrators was verified in the South-West Region.

237. A total of 22 attacks on schools (18) and hospitals (4), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals were attributed to unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (16), ISWAP (2), the Cameroon Armed Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (2), including one attack that occurred during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces. Incidents were verified in the North-West (11), South-West (8) and Far North (3) Regions and involved attacks and threats against related protected persons, including their killing and abduction, and destruction and damage to facilities.

238. The United Nations verified the military use of 21 schools by the Cameroon Armed Forces in the Far-North for one year. Four schools continued to be used as at December 2021.

239. The United Nations verified the abduction of 55 children (14 boys, 33 girls, 8 sex unknown) by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (39), including JAS (24) and ISWAP (2), and unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (16). Violations occurred in Far North (39), North-West (12) and South-West (4) Regions. Children were abducted for ransom (16), recruitment and use (3) and for unknown purposes (36). Of the 55 who were abducted, 12 children were rescued or released, 7 remain in captivity, 3 were arrested by the Cameroon Armed Forces, while the status of 33 is unknown.

240. A total of 18 verified incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (14) Regions, the Cameroon Armed Forces (3) and unidentified perpetrators during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces (1). Incidents involved the abduction of, and threats and violence against, humanitarian personnel and assets, access restrictions and looting in North-West (10) and South-West (8) Regions.

Developments and concerns

241. I welcome the training of police officers on child protection, including in the North-West and South-West Regions, by the United Nations. I call upon the Government to extend the training to all defence and security forces. I also call upon the Government to ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes consider the specific needs and rights of children formerly associated with armed groups and to allow child protection actors access to all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres. I further call upon the Government to pursue

its efforts to strengthen the protection of children, including by ensuring accountability for grave violations against children.

242. I am concerned about the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups. I call upon the Government to treat these children primarily as victims, with detention as a measure of last resort, and to release all children in its custody. I urge the Government to adopt a handover protocol for children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors.

243. I am deeply concerned about the continued grave violations in the North-West and South-West Regions, particularly the denial of humanitarian access, including the detention of humanitarian personnel and attacks on schools, including the killing and abduction of teachers and students. I urge all parties to immediately cease all violations and protect schools and hospitals and prevent their military use.

244. I urge Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups in the Far North Region to put an end to violations and immediately release associated children.

India

245. The United Nations verified 54 grave violations against 49 children (45 boys, 4 girls).

246. The recruitment and use of 18 boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir was verified.

247. A total of 33 boys were detained by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir for their alleged association with armed groups or on national security grounds.

248. A total of 34 children (30 boys, 4 girls) were killed (5) and maimed (29) by Indian security forces, including by the use of pellets by the Central Reserve Police Force (19), unidentified perpetrators (4), crossfire between armed groups and unidentified perpetrators (7), and crossfire and shelling across the line of control (4).

249. The killing of two teachers by an armed group in Srinagar was verified.

Developments and concerns

250. I welcome the ongoing engagement of the Government with my Special Representative, including the interministerial meeting held in November 2021 and the appointment of a national focal point to identify priority national interventions so as to enhance the protection of children. I further welcome the agreement to a joint technical mission to hold interministerial, technical-level meetings with the United Nations during 2022 to identify areas of enhanced cooperation for child protection. This enhanced engagement may lead to the removal of India as a situation of concern from my next report on children and armed conflict, should all practical measures agreed to in such meetings be fully implemented by that date.

251. I welcome the legal and administrative framework for the protection of children and improved access to child protection services in Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir, and progress in the creation of a Jammu and Kashmir commission for the protection of children's rights, but I remain concerned about the risk of child recruitment by armed groups in affected districts.

252. I am concerned by the increased number of violations against children verified in Jammu and Kashmir. I call upon the Government to strengthen child protection, including by ending the use of pellet guns against children and building the capacity of its forces. I am concerned by the detention of children, and I urge the Government to ensure that children are detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate

period of time, and to prevent all forms of ill-treatment in detention in line, with the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Lake Chad basin

253. The United Nations verified 928 grave violations against 826 children (393 boys, 425 girls, 8 sex unknown) in the Lake Chad basin region, namely in the Far North Region of Cameroon (94), Lac Province in Chad (166), Diffa Region in the Niger (224) and north-east Nigeria (444). Among those children, 68 were victims of multiple violations. Violations were primarily perpetrated by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (890), including Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (222) and Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (243). Information pertaining to violations in Cameroon's Far North and in north-east Nigeria is included under the respective country sections.

254. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 11 boys, some as young as 10, in Chad (8) and the Niger (3) by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups. Children in Chad were predominantly recruited through abduction and were used in support roles.

255. The United Nations verified the killing (11) and maiming (15) of 26 children (21 boys, 5 girls) in Chad (14) and the Niger (12), by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (23) and unidentified perpetrators (3) during crossfire between the Niger security forces and unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups. Most child casualties resulted from improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war (15) and gunshots (7).

256. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against two girls were verified and attributed to the Chadian National Army, in Lac Province.

257. Two attacks on hospitals by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups in the Niger were verified. Incidents involved damage to and the looting of health facilities and equipment.

258. A total of 349 children (167 boys, 182 girls) were abducted in Chad (142) and the Niger (207) by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups. Among those abducted, 1 child was killed, 35 were released and 6 escaped, while the status of 307 children is unknown.

Developments and concerns

259. I welcome the commitment by the Government of Chad to the protection of children, including efforts to comply with its action plan on child recruitment and use, which was completed in 2014, and regular training for its armed forces. These efforts should be prioritized, including by incorporating such training into the curricula of military schools. I urge the Government of Chad to pursue accountability for violations against children, including sexual violence.

260. I welcome the efforts of the Government of the Niger to enhance the protection of children, and the fact that children released from armed groups transiting through the anti-terrorist cell in Diffa were increasingly handed over to civilian child protection actors. Authorities in the Diffa Region established a reintegration programme, including for children separated from armed groups.

261. I call upon the Governments of Chad and the Niger to continue to implement their respective handover protocols for children formerly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors. Children allegedly associated with armed groups must be treated primarily as victims, with detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

262. The scale of grave violations perpetrated by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups in the Lake Chad basin region remains a serious concern, notably the abduction, killing and maiming of and the recruitment and use of children. I urge these groups to end and prevent all grave violations and immediately release all children.

Nigeria

263. The United Nations verified 444 grave violations against 356 children (165 boys, 190 girls, 1 sex unknown) in north-east Nigeria, including 49 children who were victims of multiple violations.

264. A total of 63 children (9 boys, 54 girls), some as young as 6, were recruited and used by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups: Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (45) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (18) in Borno State, mostly following abduction.

265. A total of 45 boys were detained by the Nigerian Security Forces for their alleged association with armed groups. All but two boys were released following United Nations advocacy. The United Nations was unable to verify the number of children in detention, as access to detention facilities was denied by the Nigerian Security Forces.

266. The United Nations verified the killing (34) and maiming (54) of 88 children (53 boys, 34 girls, 1 sex unknown) attributed to ISWAP (57), unidentified perpetrators (19), the Nigerian Security Forces (7) and JAS (5) in Borno (77) and Yobe (11) States. Child casualties resulted mainly from gunshots.

267. The United Nations verified sexual violence perpetrated against 53 girls, including forced marriage (50) and rape (3), by JAS (44), ISWAP (6) and the Nigerian Security Forces (3) in Borno State.

268. A total of 15 attacks on schools (4) and hospitals (11) were verified and attributed to ISWAP (12), JAS (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1) in Yobe (8), Borno (5) and Adamawa (2) States. Incidents involved destruction and looting.

269. Some 211 children (115 boys, 96 girls) were abducted by ISWAP (110) and JAS (101) in Borno (167), Adamawa (43) and Yobe (1) States. Most of the children (122) escaped or were released, while 89 remain unaccounted for.

270. Fourteen verified incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to ISWAP (13) and the Nigerian Security Forces (1) in Borno (11) and Yobe (3) States.

Developments and concerns

271. I commend the Civilian Joint Task Force for sustaining the progress on the 2017 action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, including through a child protection training plan and the establishment of child protection units in Civilian Joint Task Force formations in Borno State, in collaboration with the United Nations.

272. I welcome the signature into law by the Borno State Governor, in January 2022, of the Child Rights Act, which provides a framework for the protection of conflict-affected children.

273. I welcome the Government's commitment to the Safe Schools Declaration, including the hosting of the fourth International Conference on the Safe Schools Declaration.

274. I call upon the Government to urgently endorse and implement the handover protocol for children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors,

to provide access for the United Nations to all children in detention and to release all children from detention.

275. I am gravely concerned about the increase in the number of grave violations, particularly abductions and sexual violence, and by the elevated numbers of child casualties of killing and maiming, and of cases of the recruitment and use of children, mostly perpetrated by ISWAP and JAS. I urge all parties to end and prevent violations and release all children.

Pakistan

276. A total of 44 children (17 boys, 2 girls, 25 unknown) were reportedly killed (19) and maimed (25) by unidentified armed elements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (19), Balochistan (16), Sindh (8) and Gilgit-Baltistan (1). Incidents included the use of improvised explosive devices (18), rockets fired from Afghanistan (8), landmines (8), explosive remnants of war (7) and attacks of unknown origin (3).

277. Two grenade attacks on schools by unidentified armed elements were reported in Peshawar and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in July.

Developments and concerns

278. I am concerned about incidents in the border areas with Afghanistan.

279. I encourage the Government to deepen its engagement with my Special Representative to develop preventive measures to protect children. I reiterate my call for the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles.

Philippines

280. The United Nations verified 55 grave violations against 46 children (27 boys, 19 girls). In addition, four grave violations against four children (3 boys, 1 girl) that occurred in previous years were verified in 2021.

281. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 27 children (14 boys, 13 girls), attributed to the New People's Army (NPA) (23), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (4), Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) (1), Dawlah Islamiyah-Maute Group (1) in Bukidnon (10), Davao del Norte (7), Agusan del Sur (4), Negros Oriental (2), Negros Occidental (2), Surigao del Sur (2), Agusan del Norte (1) and Sulu (1) Provinces. Two children were recruited and used twice by two different perpetrators. Children were used in combat (1) and support roles (24). In addition, the earlier recruitment and use of one boy by the Dawlah Islamiyah-Maute Group was verified in 2021.

282. The United Nations verified the detention of 24 children (13 boys, 11 girls) by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (9), the Philippine National Police (PNP) (3) and jointly by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police (12) in Sulu (11), Bukidnon (7), Lanao del Sur (2), Agusan del Sur (2), Maguindanao (1) and Cebu (1) Provinces. Fifteen children were released.

283. The killing (5) and maiming (16) of 21 children (15 boys, 6 girls) was attributed to the Armed Forces of the Philippines (7), NPA (6), the Philippine National Police (4), unidentified perpetrators (4), including resulting from crossfire between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (BIFF) (2) and between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and NPA (1) and from improvised explosive devices (1). Child casualties occurred in Maguindanao (10), Agusan del Sur (2), Albay (2), Masbate (2), North Cotabato (2) and other provinces (2). In addition, the earlier maiming of one girl by NPA was verified in 2021.

284. No incidents of sexual violence were verified. An earlier case of sexual violence (forced marriage) affecting one girl and perpetrated by ASG was verified in 2021 by the United Nations.

285. Five attacks on schools and protected persons in relation to schools by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (2), the Philippine National Police (2) and BIFF (1) were verified in Sultan Kudarat (2), Maguindanao (1), Bukidnon (1) and Cebu (1).

286. One boy was abducted by the Armed Forces of the Philippines in Agusan del Sur Province. In addition, the earlier abduction of a boy by NPA was verified in 2021 by the United Nations.

Developments and concerns

287. I welcome the signature by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the United Nations of the strategic plan to prevent and respond to grave child rights violations in situations of armed conflict in June 2021 and call for its implementation. I welcome efforts by the Council for the Welfare of Children to ensure the timely intervention and reintegration of children associated with armed groups or detained for alleged association.

288. I welcome the issuance by the Philippine National Police of its child protection policy, which incorporates provisions of the Republic Act No. 11188 (Special Protection of Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Act) and its Children in Situations of Armed Conflict Handling Protocol, to prevent grave violations against children. The training of 3,139 child protection actors by the Government on the Act and its Protocol are welcomed. I encourage the Government to pursue the implementation of its child protection policies, including its national policy framework of 2019 on learners and schools as zones of peace.

289. I welcome the incorporation of the protection of children in situations of armed conflict in the Bangsamoro Children's Code in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao. The establishment of a regional reporting system on grave violations in Northern Mindanao by the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao is welcomed.

290. I am concerned by the increase in the number of cases of the recruitment and use of children, and by ongoing grave violations, in particular the killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and threats against school personnel. I urge all parties to end and prevent violations and reiterate my call upon armed groups to engage with the United Nations to adopt measures, including action plans to end and prevent violations.

291. I encourage the Government to endorse the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles.

IV. Recommendations

292. I welcome the continued engagement by parties to conflict with the United Nations to develop and implement action plans and commitments to protect children in armed conflict. I reiterate my call upon Member States to continue to support this engagement, including by facilitating United Nations engagement with non-State actors. I encourage Member States to adopt and implement handover protocols for children encountered or detained during military operations to civilian child protection actors. I request my Special Representative and the country task forces to engage with parties to prevent grave violations, including through engagement with

regional organizations on prevention modalities, and to strengthen the monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict in coordination with United Nations system entities.

293. I call upon the Security Council to ensure that child protection provisions and capacity are included in all relevant mandates of United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions in line with the 2017 policy on child protection in United Nations peace operations, and to ensure that data and capacity on child protection are preserved and transferred during mission transitions. I underline the importance of mainstreaming child protection concerns in early warning, conflict analysis, the pacific settlement of disputes, transitional justice and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration.

294. I call upon Member States to adopt and implement policies to promote the rights of the child, including by becoming parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, if they have not yet done so. I call upon Member States to endorse and implement the Paris Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles.

295. I remain concerned by the scale and severity of grave violations committed against children. I call upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law and to immediately end and prevent grave violations. I urge Member States and parties to conflict to define a child as every human being below the age of 18 years.

296. I call for the adoption and implementation of legislation that criminalizes violations of relevant rules of international law, including on grave violations pertaining to the protection of children in armed conflict, and encourage Member States to adopt national accountability measures and to cooperate with international accountability mechanisms. I call for the inclusion of accountability provisions in action plans signed between the United Nations and parties listed in the annexes.

297. I am deeply concerned at the number of children deprived of liberty, and I reiterate that detention should be used only as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, that alternatives to detention should be prioritized and that children should never be detained solely for their or their parents' actual or alleged association with armed groups. I urge Member States to treat children actually or allegedly associated with armed forces or groups, including those designated as terrorist groups, primarily as victims, to prioritize their best interest, to give child protection actors access to them and to continue to search for durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation and reintegration for those with alleged links to Da'esh in Iraq and in the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with international law. I am concerned about the impact of counter-terrorism measures on children and I call upon Member States to ensure their consistency with the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

298. I call upon all parties to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access, as well as access by children to services, assistance and protection, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets. I underline that hospitals, schools and their personnel must be protected, in accordance with international humanitarian law. I urge parties to refrain from the military use of schools and hospitals.

299. I call upon the donor community to urgently provide financial support and technical assistance for sustainable, timely, gender- and age-sensitive, survivor-centred and inclusive reintegration programmes for children, including for survivors of sexual violence. I encourage the international community to provide funding for

monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children and for strengthening child protection capacities on the ground.

300. I encourage Member States and regional and subregional organizations to engage with the United Nations to improve analysis, develop strategies to prevent grave violations and foster partnerships.

V. Lists contained in the annexes to the present report

301. In Colombia, the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups have been listed under section A of annex I for the recruitment and use of children. In Burkina Faso, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin has been listed under section A of annex II for the recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction of children. In the Lake Chad Basin region, Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province, have been listed for the abduction of children under section A of annex II. These parties are listed following a substantial increase of these violations since my previous report. I request my Special Representative to promote enhanced monitoring capacity in the Central Sahel region and to continue to promote monitoring capacity in the Lake Chad Basin region.

302. In Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, there were substantial rocket strikes by the Palestinian armed groups, especially in May 2021, resulting in a significant increase in the number of cases of violence against children. If the high number of violations against children were to be repeated in 2022, without meaningful improvement, Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades and Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades, should be listed. Palestinian parties must urgently engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations to prevent any more violations against children, and they must adopt clear and time-bound commitments to prevent violations against children.

303. During the May 2021 escalation of hostilities, there were substantial air strikes by the Israeli armed forces, resulting in a significant increase the number of cases of violence against children. So far this year, we have not witnessed a similar number of violations. However, should the situation repeat itself in 2022, without meaningful improvement, Israel should be listed. Israeli authorities are engaging with my Special Representative and the United Nations to prevent any more violations against children and adopt clear and time-bound commitments.

304. The following parties were previously listed and have had additional violations added to their listing. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, because of the continuous increase in cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence by the Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale and by the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) armed groups, both parties have been listed under section A of annex I for this violation.

305. In Yemen, the Government forces, including the Yemen Armed Forces, have been delisted for the violation of recruitment and use of children owing to progress in the implementation of their action plan and to the significant decrease in the number of cases of this violation. The delisting is conditional upon the finalization of all pending action plan activities and the continued decrease in the recruitment and use of children by the Government forces, including the Yemen Armed Forces. A continued United Nations monitoring and engagement period of 12 months will ensure the sustainability of all existing measures, as verified by the United Nations, and continued engagement with my Special Representative and the United Nations. Any failure in this regard would result in a relisting for the same violation in my next

report. In South Sudan, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces, having signed a comprehensive action plan in 2020 and made progress in its implementation while a decrease in violations has been verified, will be delisted for the violation of attacks on schools and hospitals. I call upon the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces, and other signatories of the action plan to finalize the implementation of all provisions of the action plan and continue to significantly reduce cases of other violations against children.

306. There has been a technical delisting of one of the listed parties following their dissolution or cessation of activities. In Afghanistan, the Afghan National Army has been removed, as these government forces ceased to exist following the takeover of Kabul by the Taliban on 15 August 2021.

307. Other modifications to the list have resulted from changes in the landscape of armed conflict in the respective situations or from changes in measures taken by parties to protect children. In Afghanistan, the Haqqani Network will be listed jointly with the Taliban, as the group is now part of the leadership of the Taliban. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the armed group Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) will be listed under section A of annex I owing to the lack of action in implementing signed commitments and because the party continued to recruit and use children in large numbers in 2021. In Mali, Platform, including affiliated groups, will be listed under section B of annex I, following the signature of action plans with the United Nations on 26 August 2021. In Somalia, the Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces will be listed as two separate entities for the same violations under section B of annex I. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias, will be listed under section B of annex I for all violations for which they are listed, following engagement with the United Nations on a draft comprehensive action plan and the national measures put in place in 2020 and 2021. This is conditional upon the signature of an action plan with the United Nations on ending and preventing grave violations against children and on the continued decrease in the number of verified cases of recruitment and use. Failure to do so would lead to a reversal of the listing of Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias, under section A of annex I in my next report.

308. The Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) will remain listed under section B of annex I, however I am concerned by the increase during 2021 of the levels of recruitment and use, despite the signature of an action plan and the promising start of activities in this regard. I urge the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units to reverse this negative trend, to continue engaging with the United Nations and to implement the provisions of its 2019 action plan. Any failure in this regard would result in being listed in section A of annex I for the same violation in my next report. The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam armed groups (see the change in terminology in para. 310 below), has been listed under section B of annex I with respect to the killing and maiming of children following concrete engagement with the United Nations and the protection measures taken, but will continue to be listed under section A of annex I for the recruitment and use of children owing to the high number of children recruited and used during 2021. I urge the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam, to continue engaging with the United Nations for the development of an action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

309. In Yemen, the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) have been listed under section B of annex I for the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children and for attacks on schools and hospitals, following engagement with the

United Nations and the signature of an action plan on grave violations. If the Houthis implement the action plan and if there is a verified significant decrease in the number of grave violations, they should as a result be considered for a delisting in the annexes to my next report. I urge them to commence implementation of the recent action plan.

310. Modifications to terminology and to names of parties resulting from changes on the ground are aimed at reflecting the name of parties more accurately. In the Central African Republic, the local defence militias known as the anti-balaka will be listed as local militias known as the anti-balaka to reflect the fact that they do not always act in self-defence. In Colombia, the dissident groups of the former Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) will be listed as Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups to align with other United Nations reporting. In Mali, Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad will be listed as Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad. Should the group fail to make significant progress in the implementation of its 2017 action plan by the publication of my next report, I may consider listing the group under section A of annex I. In addition, Ansar Eddine will be listed as Ansar Eddine, as part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the Syrian armed opposition groups (formerly known as the Free Syrian Army) will be listed as the opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam, to reflect the composition of these groups. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) will be listed as Da'esh following the adoption of resolution [75/291](#) by the General Assembly.

311. In view of the gravity and number of violations reported and, where possible, verified in Mozambique during 2021 (recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, and denial of humanitarian access), this situation will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report.

312. In view of the gravity of clashes in 2021 between the Ethiopian National Defence and Federal Police Forces, the Tigray People's Liberation Front and other parties, including militias and regional forces, and the killing and maiming of children, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abductions, and the denial of humanitarian access, this situation will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report.

313. In view of the ongoing war in Ukraine, including violations against civilians, including children, because of the high intensity of this conflict, this situation will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report. I request my Special Representative to engage with all parties to the conflict to urgently address child protection issues, including the prevention of violations against children.

Annex I

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1379 (2001), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015), parties that commit grave violations affecting children in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council*

A. Listed parties that have not put in place measures during the reporting period to improve the protection of children

Parties in Afghanistan

Non-State actors

1. Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar^{a,b}
2. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province^{a,b,d}
3. Taliban forces and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani Network^{a,b,d,e}

Parties in Colombia

Non-State actors

1. Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups^a
2. Ejército de Liberación Nacional^a

Parties in the Central African Republic

Non-State actors

1. Local militias known as the anti-balaka^{a,b,c}
2. Lord's Resistance Army^{a,b,c,e}

Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Non-State actors

1. Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain^a
2. Allied Democratic Forces^{a,b,d,e}
3. Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO)^{b,c,d}
4. Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi^{a,c,d,e}
5. Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri^{a,c,d,e}
6. Lord's Resistance Army^{a,b,c,e}
7. Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale^{a,c,e}

* Parties listed in section A have not put in place adequate measures to improve the protection of children during the reporting period; parties listed in section B have put in place measures to improve the protection of children during the reporting period.

^a Party that recruits and uses children.

^b Party that kills and maims children.

^c Party that commits rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

^d Party that engages in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.

^e Party that abducts children.

^f Party that has concluded an action plan, joint commitment or similar measure with the United Nations in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).

8. Mai-Mai Mazembe^{a,b,e,f}
9. Mai-Mai Simba^{a,c}
10. Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové^{a,b,c}
11. Nyatura^{a,c,e}
12. Raia Mutomboki^{a,c,e,f}

Parties in Iraq

Non-State actors

Da'esh^{a,b,c,d,e}

Parties in Mali

Non-State actors

Ansar Eddine, as part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin^{a,c}

Parties in Myanmar

State actors

Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forces^{b,c}

Non-State actors

United Wa State Army^a

Parties in Somalia

Non-State actors

1. Al-Shabaab^{a,b,c,d,e}
2. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a^a

Parties in the Sudan

Non-State actors

1. Justice and Equality Movement^{a,f}
2. Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid^a
3. Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi^{a,f}
4. Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction^{a,f}
5. Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction^{a,f}

Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

Non-State actors

1. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham^{a,b}
2. Da'esh^{a,b,c,d,e}
3. The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam^a

Parties in Yemen

Non-State actors

1. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula^a
2. Pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees^a
3. Security Belt Forces^a

B. Listed parties that have put in place measures during the reporting period aimed at improving the protection of children

Parties in the Central African Republic

Non-State actors

Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique as part of the former Séléka coalition^{a,b,c,d,f}

Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

State actors

Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo^{c,f}

Parties in Iraq

State actors

Popular Mobilization Forces^a

Parties in Mali

Non-State actors

1. Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad^{a,c,f}
2. Platform, including affiliated groups^{a,f}

Parties in Myanmar

State actors

Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forces^{a,f}

Non-State actors

1. Democratic Karen Benevolent Army^{a,f}
2. Kachin Independence Army^a
3. Karen National Liberation Army^a
4. Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council^a
5. Karenni Army^a
6. Shan State Army^a

Parties in Somalia

State actors

1. Somali Federal Defence Forces^{a,b,c,f}
2. Somali Police Force^{a,b,c,f}

Parties in South Sudan

State actors

South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces^{a,b,c,e,f}

Non-State actors

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar^{a,b,e,f}

Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic

State actors

Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias^{a,b,c,d}

Non-State actors

The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam^b

Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ)^{a,f}

Parties in Yemen

Non-State actors

Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah)^{a,b,d,f}

Annex II

Pursuant to Security Council resolutions 1379 (2001), 1882 (2009), 1998 (2011) and 2225 (2015), parties that commit grave violations affecting children in situations of armed conflict not on the agenda of the Security Council, or in other situations*

A. Listed parties that have not put in place measures during the reporting period to improve the protection of children

Parties in Burkina Faso

Non-State actors

Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin^{a,b,e}

Parties in the Lake Chad basin

Non-State actors

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province^e

Parties in Nigeria

Non-State actors

Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province^{a,b,c,d,e}

Parties in the Philippines

Non-State actors

1. Abu Sayyaf Group^a
2. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters^a
3. New People's Army^a

B. Listed parties that have put in place measures during the reporting period aimed at improving the protection of children

None

* Parties listed in section A have not put in place adequate measures to improve the protection of children during the reporting period; parties listed in section B have put in place measures to improve the protection of children during the reporting period.

^a Party that recruits and uses children.

^b Party that kills and maims children.

^c Party that commits rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

^d Party that engages in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.

^e Party that abducts children.

^f Party that has concluded an action plan, joint commitment or similar measure with the United Nations in line with Security Council resolutions 1539 (2004) and 1612 (2005).