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UN 'Blacklists' Saudi-led Coalition for Violations against Children
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UN 'Blacklists' Saudi-led Coalition for Violations against Children

The United Nations is finally calling out the Saudi Arabia-led coalition for horrific attacks that have killed hundreds of Yemeni children. After months of controversy, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has placed the coalition on his annual "list of shame" for violations against children.

For more than two years, child casualties and other abuses against children have been mounting in Yemen. Human Rights Watch has documented the Saudi-led coalition, Houthi-Saleh forces, and other parties [killing and maiming children, arbitrarily detaining and disappearing them](#), recruiting them to fight, attacking their schools and hospitals or stopping desperately needed aid from reaching them.

Last year, then Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon included the Saudi-led coalition on his blacklist, along with the Houthis, Al Qaeda in the Arabia Peninsula (AQAP), and government and pro-government forces. But, after a few days, the secretary-general [removed the coalition](#) from the list, after Saudi Arabia and its allies threatened to withdraw millions of dollars in UN funding. Other parties to the conflict remained on the blacklist – and rightly so. But, removing the coalition sent a terrible message that if a country is wealthy and powerful enough, it can escape accountability for abuses.

This year, Secretary-General Guterres has not let the Saudi-led coalition off the hook. Together with other warring parties in Yemen, he has included the coalition in his new list of shame. A UN [report made public today states](#) that in 2016, coalition airstrikes killed or wounded nearly 700 children, and damaged or destroyed nearly 40 schools and hospitals. Despite Saudi promises to improve compliance with the laws of war, the toll on children continues unabated, with [recent attacks](#) wiping out entire families.

The coalition has also [blocked fuel and aid shipments](#), contributing to one of the worst humanitarian crises on the planet. [Cholera cases are increasing 5,000 a day, and an estimated 1.8 million children are acutely malnourished.](#)

To get off the list this time, the coalition and other parties must take meaningful action – not just make empty promises – and immediately enter into concrete action plans with the UN to minimize child casualties. Other governments, particularly those that arm the coalition like the US, UK, and France, shouldn't let the coalition off the hook either. They should suspend arms sales to the coalition until unlawful attacks stop.