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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 2019, is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2427 (2018) and presents trends regarding the impact of armed conflict on children and information on violations committed.[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 personnel,[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 only verified in 2019, that information is qualified as relating to an incident that was verified at a later date. The information presented does not represent the full scale of violations against children, as verification depends on access. The report presents trends and patterns of violations, in order to effect a change in behaviour by parties, contribute to facilitating engagement with parties responsible for violations, promote accountability and include child protection issues in peace processes. Attacks or threats of attacks on community and civic leaders, on human rights defenders and on monitors of

[1] See also the relevant reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in specific country situations, in particular in the Central African Republic (S/2019/852), Colombia (S/2019/1017), Iraq (S/2019/984) and Somalia (S/2020/174), and the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the Human Rights Council (A/HRC/43/38).

[2] Under the terms of Security Council resolutions 1998 (2011) and 2143 (2014), protected persons are considered to be teachers, doctors, other educational personnel, students and patients.

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violations against children is 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 ensure 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 Member States, the annexes distinguish between listed parties that have put in place measures aimed at improving the protection of children, during the reporting period, and parties that have not.

II. Situation of children and armed conflict

4. Increased engagement by my Special Representative and the country task forces on monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict resulted in the signing of new concrete time-bound action plans and commitments by listed parties with the United Nations.[3] Coupled with the implementation of action plans and commitments in several situations, these engagements yielded positive change for children, including thousands of children separated from armed groups and armed forces, and in some areas resulted in greater access for humanitarian and child protection actors. Engagement with governments and armed groups led to improvements in age screening procedures and the introduction of legislation to better protect child rights. United Nations advocacy, including the “Act to Protect children affected by conflict” campaign, national political talks or peace processes, and the reduction of conflict, in some of the situations, were beneficial to the protection of children in armed conflict.

A. Overview of trends and patterns

5. The United Nations verified over 25,000 grave violations[4] against children in 19 situations, more than half committed by non-State actors, and a third by government and international forces. Overall, 24,422 violations were committed or continued to be during the reporting period, and 1,241 were committed previously and verified in 2019.

6. Some 7,747 children, some as young as 6, were verified as having been recruited and used. Among those, 90 per cent were used by non-State actors. Some action plans led to increased access for the United Nations and its partners to verify violations and release children. In Nigeria and Mali, the late verification of cases attributed to the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) and Coordination des mouvements de l’Azawad (CMA) respectively reflect their willingness to implement action plans. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo or the Central African Republic, the increase in numbers is due to the high numbers of previous recruitments verified upon separation in 2019, following engagement on actions plans or other commitments. Notable

[3] An exhaustive list of action plans signed between parties to the conflict and the United Nations can be found at: https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/tools-for-action/action-plans/.

[4] The use of the term “grave violations” or “violations” refer to each individual child affected by recruitment and use, killing and maiming, sexual violence and abductions, while the number of incidents is used for attacks on schools and hospitals and the denial of humanitarian access.

decreases in the recruitment and use of children occurred in Colombia and Iraq, although monitoring was challenged by security conditions.

7. Some 10,173 children were verified as having been killed (4,019) and maimed (6,154). While a general decrease in the number of verified child casualties was observed, the number of incidents of the killing and maiming of children remains the highest verified violation, which underlines the serious concerns about the violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law, about the lack of capacity and of measures to mitigate harm, and about warfare in densely populated areas. Causes of casualties include crossfire, small arms and light weapons (see S/2019/1011), ground engagement between parties, the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and the excessive use of force by State actors. Afghanistan remained the deadliest conflict for children, with a 67 per cent increase in suicide and complex attacks[5] affecting children, outweighing the decrease in casualties from aerial attacks. In Mali, an unprecedented number of child casualties was verified, 91 per cent of which were in Mopti region. In Myanmar, intensified fighting in Rakhine State caused a threefold increase of child casualties. Among the casualties, 25 per cent were caused by explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and anti-personnel mines. Iraq and the Philippines had the highest prevalence of such casualties.

8. The United Nations verified 927 attacks on schools (494) and hospitals (433), including on protected persons. The highest numbers were verified in the Syrian Arab Republic, the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Afghanistan and Somalia. Globally, attacks on schools and hospitals committed by State actors (503) nearly doubled. In Gaza and Israel, conflict escalation, notably air strikes by Israeli forces and rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups, continued to significantly disrupt children's education. Schools continued to be used for military purposes, eroding their sanctity as safe spaces and exposing schools, teachers and students to attack. When they were not cancelled indefinitely, classes have been suspended for weeks or longer.

9. Some 4,400 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access to children[6] were verified, the highest increase in the number of incidents verified for any violation, compared with 2018. Overwhelmingly, non-State actors were responsible for such incidents, notably in Yemen, Mali, the Central African Republic and the Syrian Arab Republic. Some 2,127 children were delayed and/or denied access to specialized medical care outside of Gaza. Violence against humanitarian workers and assets, including killings, assaults and arbitrary detention, and the military use of humanitarian premises, attacks on essential civilian infrastructure, bureaucratic impediments and restrictions on movements, seriously disrupted humanitarian activities. In some contexts, humanitarian operations were also constrained by groups designated as terrorist by the United Nations and by counter-terrorism measures.

10. Rape and other forms of sexual violence continued to be vastly underreported, with 735 verified cases. Cases were prevalent in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, the Central African Republic, the Sudan and South Sudan. Cases attributed to State actors nearly doubled, reinforcing the fear of retaliations and of stigma for children and families willing to report sexual violence. Sexual violence,

[5] A deliberate and coordinated attack that includes all of the three following elements: a suicide device, more than one attacker and more than one type of device, as defined in the annual report of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

[6] 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.

including rape, gang rape, sexual slavery and forced marriage, remains a tactic of war and a taboo subject, disproportionately affecting girls. The adoption of strong legislation is essential to ending such practices. The lack of protection, of holistic services for survivors and of accountability mechanisms disincentivize survivors, their families and witnesses from reporting violations, namely by reinforcing the stigmatization of survivors and their families and by discouraging male survivors from disclosing violations and accessing assistance and justice (S/2020/487).

11. The United Nations verified the abduction of 1,683 children, with over 95 per cent of cases perpetrated by non-State actors, mainly in Somalia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria. Often combined with other violations, the abduction of children, although a feature of other violations, is possibly underreported. Children were abducted for recruitment and use and sexual violence or ransom.

B. Challenges and the way forward

12. A total of 13,200 children were separated from non-State actors and armed forces globally in 2019. Fundamental challenges hindered the successful and sustainable reintegration of these children, as well as at-risk children who were protected from recruitment through action plans or other measures, and of children released from detention for actual or alleged association with armed groups, including those designated as terrorist by the United Nations. Reintegration programmes must be gender-responsive, include mental health and psychosocial support, education and vocational training, and access to civil registry, identification documents and to justice. Without comprehensive programmes, poverty, the lack of opportunities and stigmatization may result in the recruitment and rerecruitment of children.

13. The scale of the situation regarding children deprived of liberty for their actual or alleged association with opposing parties continued unabated, with over 2,500 children held. Detained children are critically vulnerable and at heightened risk of violence, including sexual violence, torture, exploitation and neglect. Children deprived of liberty need to urgently benefit from individualized care and protection, including nutrition, medical and psychosocial care, and access fundamental rights, including to due process. Children actually or allegedly associated with armed groups, including with United Nations-designated terrorist groups, should be detained only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time, and their reintegration must be prioritized. The adoption of national protocols has mitigated this issue in some situations.

14. Cross-border dynamics of conflict and intercommunal conflict affecting children are another issue of concern, particularly in the Sahel and Lake Chad Basin regions. Insecurity, violence and military operations, including counter-terrorism operations, have hindered access for child protection actors. It is urgent that the children affected by such factors be provided with assistance and protection.

15. Peace remains the most powerful means to reduce violations against children. Governments and non-State actors, in a quarter of the situations outlined in the present report, engaged in some efforts relating to a peace process, whether by initiating negotiations or implementing peace agreements. Child protection should be prioritized in engaging with parties to conflict and in peace processes. The children and armed conflict agenda is central to protection, peacebuilding and prevention efforts. My Special Representative developed the “Practical guidance for mediators to protect children in situations of armed conflict”, which I launched on 12 February 2020.

III. Information on grave violations

A. Situations on the agenda of the Security Council

Afghanistan

16. The United Nations verified 3,410 grave violations against 3,245 children (2,317 boys, 915 girls, 13 sex unknown).

17. A total of 64 boys, some as young as 10, were recruited and used by the Taliban (58), Afghan National Police (3), Afghan Local Police, pro-government militia, and by Afghan Local Police and pro-government militias (1 each). Children were used for combat, support roles and sexual purposes, including *bacha bazi*.[7]

18. The Government reported that 146 boys were detained in juvenile rehabilitation centres on national security-related charges.

19. Of concern, reports currently being verified indicate that among the 506 children, reportedly including foreigners, who surrendered with the thousands of individuals allegedly associated with Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province (ISIL-KP),[8] all children over the age of 12 were transferred to the Kabul juvenile rehabilitation centre.

20. A total of 3,149 children (2,226 boys, 910 girls, 13 sex unknown) were killed (874 children) and maimed (2,275 children), mainly as a result of ground engagements (1,213), by non-suicide attacks with the use of improvised explosive devices (575), and suicide and complex attacks (460). Additionally, explosive remnants of war and aerial attacks caused 403 and 341 casualties, respectively. The remaining 157 casualties resulted mostly from search operations, targeted or deliberate killings, and escalation of force. Armed groups caused 1,535 casualties, which were attributed to the Taliban (1,238), ISIL-KP (242) and unidentified armed groups (55). Government and pro-government forces were responsible for 1,032 casualties, including the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (610) (mainly Afghan National Army (491), the National Directorate of Security (38) and Afghan National Police (30)), international forces (248), pro-government militia (45), joint operations of government and pro-government forces (117) and undetermined government and pro-government forces (12). Another 403 casualties were jointly attributed to government and pro-government forces and armed groups, responsibility for 140 casualties was unattributed, and 39 casualties resulted from cross-border engagements at the border with Pakistan.

21. Sexual violence affecting 18 children (13 boys, 5 girls) was attributed to the Taliban (14), Afghan National Police (3) and one incident was jointly attributed to Afghan Local Police and pro-government militia. Two boys were used as *bacha bazi*.

22. Some 145 attacks against schools (70), hospitals (75) and protected personnel were verified. Armed groups were responsible for 113 attacks, attributed to the Taliban (101), ISIL-KP (8) and unidentified armed groups (4). A total of 26 attacks were attributed to government and pro-government forces, including the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (20) (Afghan National Army (10), National Directorate of Security (8), Afghan National Police and Afghan Local Police (1 each))

[7] *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 UNAMA and OHCHR in their annual report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict.

[8] Additional information on Afghanistan is included in the twenty-fifth report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team submitted pursuant to resolution 2368 (2017) concerning ISIL (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities (S/2020/53).

and international forces (6). Five attacks were attributed both to government and pro-government forces and armed groups, and one consisted of cross-border shelling from the Pakistan territory. Among all the attacks, 24 attacks against schools (21) and hospitals (3) resulted from election-related violence. Other attacks included targeting or damaging facilities and the killing, injuring or abduction of protected personnel, or such personnel being subjected to threats.

23. The military use of six schools by the Afghan National Army and one school by government and pro-government forces was verified. Two medical facilities were used by the Afghan National Army, and jointly by the Afghan National Army, the Afghan Local Police and pro-government militia.

24. The abduction of 14 boys as young as 11, by the Taliban (12), Afghan National Police and pro-government militia (1 each), mostly for family association or alleged association with the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and in one case for sexual purposes, were verified.

25. A total of 20 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by the Taliban (13), ISIL-KP (4), unidentified armed groups (2) and international forces (1) were verified. Armed groups continued to intimidate, abduct, kill and injure humanitarian personnel, including polio vaccinators.

Developments and concerns

26. I commend the Government for progress in implementing the 2011 action plan and 2014 road map to end and prevent child recruitment and use, and for the presidential enactment of the Child Rights Protection Law in March 2019, prohibiting *bacha bazi* and the recruitment and use of children, and I call for its swift implementation, particularly in Logar Province. I note that child protection units within the Afghan National Police recruitment centres rejected 439 child applicants. I recommend the adoption of a standardized referral system for the reintegration of children who have been separated from parties to conflict, released from detention and/or rejected from recruitment centres.

27. I am extremely concerned about the increased number of children killed and maimed by all parties, in particular by the 67 per cent increase in incidents resulting from suicide attacks involving the use of improvised explosive devices and from complex attacks. I remain concerned about casualties caused by government and international forces, and I urge them to review, strengthen and implement current tactical protocols to prevent child casualties. I note the measures taken by the international forces and the decrease in the number of child casualties from aerial operations. I encourage the Government to engage with the United Nations to broaden the existing action plan and road map to end and prevent all grave violations by its forces. I request my Special Representative to continue to engage proactively and follow up on the implementation of all measures taken by the government and international forces to mitigate child casualties.

28. I am concerned that polio vaccinators are denied access by the Taliban and affiliated groups. I urge the Taliban to include child protection directives in their operational commands, in order to protect all children under the age of 18. I encourage them to sign an action plan with the United Nations to end and prevent violations against children. I further urge all parties to cease the use of improvised explosive devices and complex attacks.

29. I welcome efforts to achieve a lasting political settlement to the conflict in Afghanistan. I urge the Government and the Taliban to work with my Special Representative and the United Nations in considering the use of the “Practical guidance for mediators” in order to include child protection in the peace process.

Central African Republic

30. The United Nations verified 517 grave violations against 413 children (249 boys, 164 girls).

31. The recruitment and use of children was verified, affecting 208 children (165 boys, 43 girls) between the ages of 11 and 17. The children were recruited and used between 2016 and 2019, but the verification occurred in 2019, upon their separation. The perpetrators were anti-balaka (91), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) (51), ex-Séléka factions (51) (Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) (36), Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) (14), Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) (1)), PK5 groups (11), Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (2), Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC) (1 each). Some girls were used for sexual purposes.

32. Four boys detained by national authorities for association with armed groups were released with no charges.

33. A total of 96 children (68 boys, 28 girls), some as young as 6 months old, were killed (61) and maimed (35) by ex-Séléka factions (37), including UPC (20), Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice (MLCJ) (10) and FPRC (7); unidentified armed elements (30); 3R (5); PK5 groups (4); anti-balaka (3); and LRA (1). Casualties also occurred during clashes between FPRC and MLCJ (8), anti-balaka and UPC (7), and anti-balaka and the national armed forces (1). Most child casualties resulted from shootings (81), including 14 boys killed or maimed during their association with armed groups. Ouaka and Vakaga Prefectures were the most affected, followed by Bangui.

34. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated against 76 girls, between the ages of 6 and 17, including one case which was verified at a later date. The main perpetrators were ex-Séléka factions (38), including FPRC (14), unidentified ex-Séléka (7), UPC (6), joint operations by FPRC and MPC (6) and MPC (5); unidentified armed elements (15); anti-balaka (10); the national armed forces (5); 3R (4); and Révolution et justice (RJ)-Sayo, LRA, Siriri, and PK5 groups (1 each). One RJ-Sayo element and one anti-balaka element were arrested for sexual violence.

35. A total of 33 children (16 boys, 17 girls), between the ages of 6 months and 16 years, were abducted by ex-Séléka (17), including FPRC (8), UPC (8) and MPC (1); unidentified armed elements (7); anti-balaka (3); FDPC (3); 3R (2); and LRA (1) for recruitment purposes (27) and ransom (6). Nine girls were raped in captivity.

36. A total of 14 attacks against schools (4) and hospitals (10) were attributed to ex-Séléka factions (6), including FPRC (4), MPC (1) and unidentified ex-Séléka (1); anti-balaka (5); unidentified armed elements, FDPC and internal security forces (1 each). Six incidents of the military use of schools were attributed to UPC (4), 3R and anti-balaka (1 each). Two schools continued to be used by UPC in Haut-Mbomou and Basse-Kotto Prefectures.

37. There were 90 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access. The main perpetrators were ex-Séléka factions (36), including UPC and FPRC (9 each), MPC (5) and other ex-Séléka factions (13); and anti-balaka (17). Nana-Grébizi, Ouham and Ouaka Prefectures were the most affected.

38. Dialogue with armed groups enabled the separation of 208 children. In addition, 647 self-demobilized children (437 boys, 210 girls) from RJ-Belanga, anti-balaka, FPRC, UPC and Rassemblement patriotique pour le renouveau de la Centrafrique

(RPRC) were identified, and 963 children (744 boys, 219 girls) entered reintegration programmes.

Developments and concerns

39. I welcome the signature of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in February 2019 between the Government and armed groups. I encourage the Government, parties to the conflict and civil society to develop a national strategy to prevent grave violations against children. I welcome the adoption of the Child Protection Code in February 2020, criminalizing the recruitment and use of children, and urge its implementation. I urge the adoption of the protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors.

40. I welcome the signing of action plans with FPRC and UPC. MPC and UPC issued command orders prohibiting grave violations. UPC appointed a child protection focal point for the implementation of the action plan. However, I remain concerned by continued violations against children by FPRC, UPC and MPC, and urge them to transfer perpetrators to competent authorities in order to ensure accountability and to implement their action plans. I note that dialogue with armed groups led to the release of 208 children. In addition, 647 self-demobilized children (437 boys, 210 girls) from RJ-Belanga, anti-balaka, FPRC, UPC and RPRC were identified and some 963 children (744 boys, 219 girls) accessed reintegration programmes.

41. I reiterate my recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic (S/2019/852).

Colombia

42. The United Nations verified 176 grave violations against 168 children (88 boys, 68 girls, 12 sex unknown).

43. The recruitment and use of children was verified, affecting 107 children (54 boys, 41 girls, 12 sex unknown) between the ages of 12 and 17. The perpetrators were the Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (40), dissident groups of the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) (40), unidentified armed groups (11), Los Caparrapos and Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia (AGC) (7 each), Ejército Popular de Liberación (EPL) (1), and the Colombian armed forces, who used a girl as an informant. According to the Government, 180 children (112 boys, 68 girls) were separated from armed groups and entered the protection programme of the Colombian Family Welfare Institute.

44. A total of 46 children (33 boys, 13 girls), between the ages of 5 and 17, were killed (23) and maimed (23). Casualties were attributed to ELN (9), the Colombian armed forces (8), AGC and dissident FARC-EP groups (6 each), EPL and Los Caparrapos (1 each), and unidentified armed groups (15). Children were mostly affected by anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices, crossfire and air strikes.

45. Rape and other forms of sexual violence affected 11 girls, between the ages of 13 and 16, with responsibility attributed to AGC, ELN and the Colombian armed forces (3 each), and dissident FARC-EP groups (2). The three cases attributed to the Armed Forces are under investigation.

46. Four children, between the ages of 2 and 15, were abducted (1 boy, 3 girls), with responsibility attributed to ELN (3) and dissident FARC-EP groups (1). All children were released from captivity, including one girl rescued by the Colombian armed forces.

47. Three attacks affected schools and related protected personnel. Two were attributed to unidentified armed groups and one occurred during crossfire between AGC and the Colombian armed forces, after the school was used by AGC.

48. There were five unattributed incidents of the denial of humanitarian access. The incidents involved restrictions to freedom of movement owing to the control of territory by armed groups and armed confrontations in Chocó, Cauca and Antioquia Departments. Several indigenous communities were confined, thereby restricting their access to crops, health and education services.

49. Monitoring and reporting remains challenging owing to security conditions in Chocó, Arauca, Norte de Santander and Putumayo Departments. Communities and victims also fear reporting violations.

Developments and concerns

50. I welcome the Government's efforts to end and prevent violations against children, notably the policy to prevent the recruitment and use of children and sexual violence against children, issued in November 2019 by the Presidential Council for Human Rights and International Affairs. I encourage the Government to develop plans of action to implement the policy at the local level and allocate adequate financial and human resources for their implementation in the areas most affected by the armed conflict, particularly in indigenous and Afro-Colombian communities.

51. I remain concerned about the continuing recruitment and use of children by armed groups, in particular by ELN and dissident FARC-EP groups, and I urge all armed groups to adopt and implement commitments to end all grave violations, and to immediately release all children.

52. I encourage the National Reintegration Council to accelerate the response for the 218 young people identified by FARC-EP for inclusion in the dedicated reintegration programme entitled "A different path of life". I urge the Government to ensure the effective reintegration of all children who have left FARC-EP and to strengthen security measures for programme participants.

53. I reiterate my recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Colombia (S/2019/1017).

Democratic Republic of the Congo

54. The United Nations verified 3,831 grave violations, affecting 3,796 children (2,908 boys, 888 girls).

55. The recruitment and use of children affected 601 children (533 boys, 68 girls), all of whom were recruited and separated in 2019, 30 per cent of whom were under the age of 15 at the time of recruitment. The perpetrators were Nyatura (167), Mai-Mai Mazembe (103), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) (55), Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové (49), Kamuina Nsapu (37), Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi (22), Raia Mutomboki (18), Conseil national pour la renaissance et la démocratie (CNRD) and unidentified armed groups (17 each), Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) (13), and other armed groups (103). Most cases were verified in North Kivu, followed by South Kivu, Ituri and the Kasais. A total of 22 girls were used for sexual purposes, 204 children were used as combatants and others were used in support roles.

56. In addition, 2,506 children (2,062 boys, 444 girls) were recruited in 2008 or later, and used until their separation in 2019, by 38 armed groups, mainly by Kamuina Nsapu (1,102), Twa militias (280), CNRD (125), Mai-Mai Mazembe (101) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1). The latter case refers to

a 15-year-old boy who participated in combat and was released, following an intervention by the United Nations, after one year. A total of 1,753 children were under the age of 15 when recruited, and 1,331 were used as combatants. Most children were separated during demobilization processes, others were voluntarily released, following engagement by the United Nations, or escaped from armed groups.

57. The armed forces and the Congolese National Police detained 111 children (106 boys, 5 girls) for alleged association with armed groups, 90 of whom were released. In addition, 21 children who had been detained since May 2018 for alleged association with Kamuina Nsapu, in Kasai Province, were released in 2019.

58. The United Nations verified the killing (68) and maiming (67) of 135 children (87 boys, 48 girls), in the majority of cases by armed groups (79) (ADF (35) and Lendu militia (26), Mai-Mai Omera (8), other groups (10)), followed by government forces (38) (armed forces (29) and national police (9)). Of the total number of child casualties, 18 resulted from anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war. All the casualties occurred during clashes, attacks on villages and intercommunal violence between Hema and Lendu communities in Ituri.

59. The perpetration of sexual violence affecting 249 girls was attributed to government forces (126) (armed forces (97), national police (25), Agence nationale de renseignements (4)); and armed groups (123) (Bantu and Twa militias (23 each), Raia Mutomboki (19), Nyatura (12), other armed groups (46)). The incidents occurred in North Kivu (64), South Kivu (50), Tanganyika (49), the Kasais (42) and other provinces (44). Almost half of the cases involving government forces were committed in the residences of the victim or the perpetrator; 26 per cent were attacks on girls returning from agricultural work; and 11 per cent occurred during military operations. Some 102 government elements were subsequently arrested. Among the 123 cases attributed to armed groups, 22 girls were used for sexual slavery and 101 girls were raped.

60. There were 30 attacks on schools (20) and hospitals (10), mostly attributed to armed groups: Twa militia (8), Mai-Mai groups (6), ADF (5), Lendu militia (4), Raia Mutomboki (3), APCLS and Kamuina Nsapu (1 each). Two attacks were attributed to the armed forces. Most schools were deliberately burned and/or looted. A high number of reported attacks on schools (108) linked to the Hema-Lendu intercommunal violence could not be verified.

61. One school was used by the armed forces for the demobilization of the Twa militia, in Tanganyika Province, and vacated after two months.

62. A total of 305 children were abducted (226 boys, 79 girls). The main perpetrators included Nyatura (86), ADF (83) and Mai-Mai Mazembe (23). Government forces abducted four children for sexual purposes and ransom. In 69 per cent of the cases, children were abducted for recruitment purposes (209). Most abductions occurred in North Kivu (187), Ituri (63), Tanganyika (31) and South Kivu (21). The United Nations continued its advocacy for the release of children abducted by Bana Mura militias in 2017 and forced into labour and sexual slavery. While 56 children returned to their families in 2019, another 54 are still being held captive.

63. There were five incidents of the denial of humanitarian access by Twa militia (3), Mai-Mai Mazembe (1) and Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri (FRPI) (1).

Developments and concerns

64. I welcome the Government's continued efforts to prevent child recruitment and use. The Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo continued to screen new recruits and 141 children were identified and separated before enrolment. I commend the sentencing of two commanders of Coalition des patriotes résistants congolais and Nyatura armed groups, including for the recruitment and use of children, and the ongoing trials of commanders of Nduma défense du Congo, FRPI and Nyatura for child recruitment. I call upon the Government to pursue accountability efforts.

65. I am encouraged that the demobilization and surrender of several armed groups allowed for the release of children. I urge the Government to facilitate the access of child protection actors to all pre-cantonment and demobilization sites in order to separate children. The Government must guarantee that all surrendered combatants and their dependants, including children, are treated with dignity and receive support, including health care and nutrition, when hosted in camps under its care.

66. I welcome the engagement of armed groups with the United Nations to end and prevent child recruitment and other grave violations, with 21 new commanders signing commitments to protect children and the release of 920 children. I urge these armed groups, notably Kamuina Nsapu, Mai-Mai Mazembe, Raia Mutomboki and Nyatura, to expeditiously release any remaining children from their ranks and end other violations, and for other groups to engage with the United Nations.

67. I am concerned at the persistent high number of cases of sexual violence perpetrated by government forces. I urge the Government to continue to prioritize prevention and to continue its accountability efforts, and to continue providing medical support to survivors and expediting the implementation of its 2012 action plan and other commitments to end sexual violence.

Iraq

68. The United Nations verified 186 grave violations affecting 184 children (133 boys, 42 girls, 9 sex unknown).

69. Four boys were recruited and used by the Iraqi Security Forces (3), and by the Popular Mobilization Forces (1) in 2016, which was verified at a later date.

70. As at 31 December, 984 children (947 boys, 37 girls), some as young as 9, were detained on national security-related charges, including for their actual or alleged association with armed groups, primarily Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

71. A total of 141 children were killed (61) and maimed (80) by ISIL (68), the Iraqi police (11), Iraqi Security Forces (5) and Operation Claw[9] (3), while responsibility for 54 casualties could not be attributed. Almost half of the casualties (67) were caused by explosive remnants of war in areas previously under ISIL control; most such casualties were attributed to ISIL (36), while the remainder were unattributed (31). In addition, 32 casualties resulted from the use of improvised explosive devices, with 12 of the casualties attributed to ISIL and the perpetrators of the others unknown. Indirect attacks or crossfire incidents resulted in the killing of 15 children and the maiming of 13 children. Among those casualties, 16 were attributed to ISIL, 5 to the Iraqi police, 5 to the Iraqi Security Forces, and 2 casualties were unattributed. A total of 14 children were killed (12) and maimed (2) in targeted attacks. Four of those casualties were attributed to ISIL, six to the Iraqi police, three to Operation Claw, and one remained unattributed.

[9] Turkey launched "Operation Claw" in northern Iraq, in May 2019.

72. Incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence, which affected three girls and took place in 2014, were attributed to ISIL and were verified at a later date.

73. Two attacks, on a school and a hospital (1 each) resulted from the use of improvised explosive devices, and both remain unattributed. Four incidents of the military use of schools by the Popular Mobilization Forces were verified.

74. The abduction of 36 children was attributed to ISIL, including the late verification of 34 children between the ages of 6 and 13 (33 boys, 1 girl) who had been abducted between 2014 and 2018.

75. While no incident of the denial of humanitarian access was verified in 2019, humanitarian actors faced bureaucratic impediments and restrictions of movement.

Developments and concerns

76. I commend the Government of Iraq for its ongoing discussion with the United Nations on developing an action plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children by the Popular Mobilization Forces, the implementation of which the United Nations is ready to support. I note that no new cases of recruitment and use by those Forces have been documented since 2016.

77. I note the finalization of a national child protection policy in December 2017 and call for its implementation. I urge the Government to adopt a comprehensive law on the rights of the child to criminalize the recruitment of individuals below the age of 18 and establishing the minimum age of criminal responsibility, in line with international juvenile justice standards.

78. I remain deeply concerned about the situation of children detained on security-related charges. Children must be treated primarily as victims and in line with international juvenile justice standards. Detention should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time, with respect for due process. The United Nations is committed to supporting the Government in the reintegration of children formerly associated with parties to conflict within its mandate. I welcome the provision of reintegration programming by the Government, with United Nations support, for 100 boys separated from parties to conflict and urge the Government to develop and implement a national reintegration programme for children affected by armed conflict.

79. I welcome the efforts of the Government to facilitate the return of children actually or allegedly associated with ISIL, and call upon all countries concerned to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of these children, in line with international law principles, including the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for the best interests of the child, and I commend those countries that have begun the voluntary repatriation of children.

80. I am concerned by the ongoing killing and maiming of children caused by landmines and explosive remnants of war. I urge the Government to fully implement international legal instruments on anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war, and to promote mine clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance and stockpile destruction.

81. I reiterate the recommendations included in my third report on children and armed conflict in Iraq (S/2019/984).

Israel and the State of Palestine

82. The United Nations verified 3,908 violations against 1,565 Palestinian and 6 Israeli children (1,486 boys, 85 girls).

83. No incidents of the recruitment and use of children were verified. Of concern, in Gaza, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad's al-Quds Brigades and Hamas' al-Qassam Brigades organized weeklong "summer camps" for adults and children as young as 14, exposing them to military content and activities. One child reported that the Israeli forces attempted to recruit him as an informant.

84. A total of 529 Palestinian children (528 boys, 1 girl) were detained for alleged security offences by Israeli forces (527) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (527, including 374 in East Jerusalem), and by de facto authorities in Gaza (2). The United Nations received testimonies of 166 children who reported ill-treatment and breaches of due process by Israeli forces, including physical violence and one threat of sexual violence.

85. A total of 32 Palestinian children (29 boys, 3 girls) and 1 Israeli girl were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (6), and the Gaza Strip (27). Most casualties were attributed to Israeli forces (29) and caused by live ammunition (15), air strikes (10) or tear-gas canisters (4). One case was attributed to a Palestinian armed group, while two children were killed in incidents involving explosive remnants of war. One Israeli girl was killed by an improvised explosive device in the occupied West Bank, attributed to unidentified perpetrators.

86. A total of 1,539 Palestinian children (1,460 boys, 79 girls) and 8 Israeli children (5 boys, 3 girls,) were maimed. Casualties were attributed to Israeli forces (1,496), Israeli settlers (19), Palestinian armed groups (7), Hamas (3), explosive remnants of war (17), unidentified perpetrators (3) and stabbing attacks not attributed to any party (2). The causes of maiming and injuries of children by Israeli forces were live ammunition (415), tear-gas inhalation (358), tear-gas canisters (311), rubber-coated metal bullets (229), ammunition shrapnel (121), air strikes (34), physical assault (22) and other causes (6). Children were maimed by Israeli forces during demonstrations (1,036) and other circumstances (1) at the Israel-Gaza perimeter fence, during air strikes by Israeli forces on Gaza (34) and on the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (425). Of the eight Israeli children maimed, three were injured in Hamas rocket attacks. The maiming or injuring of 532 additional children (510 boys, 22 girls) by Israeli forces during demonstrations in Gaza in 2018 was verified at a later date, in 2019.

87. Some 208 attacks on schools (15) and hospitals (193) and protected personnel, attributed to Israeli forces (201) and settlers (7), occurred in Gaza (168) and in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem (40), and involved hospitals being damaged by air strikes (1) or affected by tear gas disrupting their functioning (3), incidents of injuring or killing of medical personnel (189) and threats against teachers or students (15). The United Nations verified 4 incidents of the military use of schools by Israeli forces and 242 other interferences with education by Israeli forces (229) and Israeli settlers (13), affecting over 48,000 Palestinian children, mostly involving Israeli forces firing live ammunition, tear gas or sound grenades in and around schools. Conflict escalation significantly affected children's education: rocket fire by Palestinian armed groups, on the one hand, and air strikes by Israeli forces on Gaza, on the other, each caused school closures for five days, affecting 1.3 million children respectively. Incendiary balloons were launched from Gaza towards Israel, some of which reportedly landed near schools.

88. The denial of humanitarian access by Israeli forces was verified in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and in Gaza. In the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, medical and other emergency services were prevented from reaching children injured in four incidents. As for Gaza, 23 per cent of applications to Israeli authorities to gain access to specialized medical treatment outside Gaza were delayed

until after the scheduled appointment and 5 per cent were denied, affecting 2,127 children (1,281 boys, 846 girls).

Developments and concerns

89. I note the decrease in the killing and maiming of children but remain extremely concerned by the high incidence of this violation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I welcome the increased dialogue on grave violations of Israel and the State of Palestine with my Special Representative and the United Nations on the ground, following my previous report, and request my Special Representative to continue her efforts to engage with all parties to end grave violations against children and to further examine grave violations against children, including recruitment and use by armed groups and killing and maiming by Israeli forces.

90. I urge all parties to end and prevent grave violations against children, in particular killing and maiming, and to apply all feasible measures to ensure the protection of, and care for, children affected by armed conflict.

91. I urge Israel to put in place measures to end any excessive use of force against children and to ensure accountability in all cases involving the killing and maiming of children. I reiterate my call upon Israel to uphold international juvenile justice standards, as well as to cease the use of administrative detention for children and end all forms of ill-treatment in detention or any attempted recruitment of detained children as informants, and I exhort Israel to better protect schools as places of learning.

92. I urge all Palestinian armed groups to uphold their responsibility to ensure the safety of children, including by preventing them from being exposed to the risk of violence or by abstaining from instrumentalizing them for political purposes, including by exposing them to military content and activities. I call upon Hamas and other armed groups in Gaza to cease all indiscriminate launching of rockets, mortars and incendiary balloons.

Lebanon

93. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 43 children (42 boys, 1 girl), between the ages of 11 and 17, by unidentified armed groups (20), Bilal Badr (10), Fath al-Islam (9), Hizbullah and Al-Nasri Front (2 each). Four children were Lebanese and 39 were Palestinian. Five children were recruited as combatants and 38 were used in support roles.

94. Children continued to be detained for association with armed groups, with 20 new verified detentions of boys, between the ages of 15 and 17, of Palestinian (9), Syrian (7) and Lebanese (4) origin. As at 31 December 2019, nine children (6 Palestinian, 3 Syrian) remained in custody, with one serving a custodial sentence and eight in pretrial detention.

95. Three children between the ages of 7 and 13 were killed (1) and maimed (2) as a result of cluster munition or explosive remnants of war in southern Lebanon.

96. Sporadic armed clashes in Palestine refugee camps continued to disrupt education and health services, leading to temporary closures of schools and hospitals. Security concerns also limited the operations of humanitarian actors.

Developments and concerns

97. I welcome the issuance of the Code of Conduct and the Code of Ethics by the Palestinian National Security Forces in Lebanon to protect people living in Palestine refugee camps.

98. I am concerned about the detention of children for alleged association with armed groups and urge the Government to treat children associated with armed groups primarily as victims, detain them only as a measure of last resort for the shortest possible period of time and promptly refer them to reintegration programmes. I reiterate my call to the Government to accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

99. I reiterate my concern about the recruitment and use of children and call upon armed groups to immediately cease this practice.

Libya

100. No incidents of the recruitment and use of children were verified. The United Nations verified the arrest and ongoing detention of eight boys between the ages of 14 and 17 by the Government of National Accord for their association with the Libyan National Army (LNA).

101. A total of 77 children between the ages of 6 and 17 were killed (35) or maimed (42) (60 boys, 17 girls), with responsibility attributed to LNA and affiliated forces (50), unidentified armed groups (9), Tebu armed groups (5), forces affiliated with the Government of National Accord (2) and Tripoli-based armed groups (1). Child casualties occurred during clashes between LNA and forces affiliated with the Government of National Accord (10). The vast majority occurred during the offensive by LNA on Tripoli and were caused by artillery shelling, air strikes, including by uncrewed aerial vehicles, and explosive remnants of war.

102. Reports of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against refugee and migrant girls were received, including incidents of forced prostitution by criminal networks, some of which are associated with armed groups.

103. The United Nations verified 24 attacks on schools (9) and hospitals (15), all of which were unattributed. Unverified reports of a further 24 attacks on health facilities were received. The hostilities forced nearly 220 schools to close in and around Tripoli, depriving at least 116,000 children of their right to education.

104. A total of 12 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to LNA and affiliated forces (5), Tripoli-based armed groups (3), the Seventh Brigade and affiliates (2), Tebu and Zawiyah armed groups (1 each). Access to Tripoli and southern Libya, where humanitarian needs are the greatest, remained restricted.

Developments and concerns

105. I am concerned about the prevalence of killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals. I urge all parties to abide by their obligations under international law, particularly the principle of distinction between civilians and persons taking a direct part in hostilities and between civilian objects and military objectives.

106. I reiterate my concern about the abuse of refugee and migrant children, including through human trafficking, the deprivation of liberty, torture and sexual violence. I call upon the Government to end child detention and to pursue alternatives. The denial of humanitarian access to children, including those in detention, is worrisome.

107. I urge the Government to engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations so as to adopt measures to end and prevent violations against children.

Mali

108. The United Nations verified 745 grave violations against 547 children (381 boys, 139 girls, 27 sex unknown).

109. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 215 children (189 boys, 26 girls), between the ages of 9 and 17. In 140 of those incidents, it was verified at a later date that the victims had been recruited and used in previous years. Most children were recruited in Kidal (131) and Gao (49) Regions. The perpetrators were the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) (136) (including Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) (88), Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA) (30), Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) (18)), Platform (27) (including Ganda Lassal Izo (12), Ganda Izo (8), Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés (GATIA) (5) and other Platform members (2)), Front de libération du Macina (FLM) (12), other armed groups (16), and the Malian armed forces (24) for the first time since 2014.

110. A total of 56 boys between the ages of 14 and 17 were captured by the Malian Defence and Security Forces (25), Operation Barkhane (18) and in joint operations of the Malian armed forces and Barkhane (13) for their alleged association with armed groups, including 10 children captured and handed over by Barkhane, who had identified them as adults to the anti-terrorism prosecutor in Bamako. Of the 56 children, 17 were still detained by the Government at the time of writing.

111. A total of 296 children (179 boys, 91 girls, 26 sex unknown), some as young as 2, were killed (185) and maimed (111), mostly in Mopti Region (269), resulting from intercommunal conflict, crossfire and improvised explosive devices. The perpetrators were dozo traditional hunters (147), unidentified armed elements (93), Fulani armed elements (31), other armed groups (17), Malian Defence and Security Forces (3) and Operation Barkhane (1). Four children were maimed during clashes between an unidentified armed group and Barkhane.

112. Sexual violence affected 19 girls, between the ages of 13 and 17, in incidents attributed to unidentified armed groups in Mopti (12), Gao (5), Ménaka and Timbuktu (1 each) Regions.

113. A total of 69 attacks on schools (55) and hospitals (14) were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (66), Dan Nan Ambassagou (2) and FLM (1). The most affected regions were Timbuktu and Mopti (23 each). Attacks involved the destruction and burning of school premises and equipment, threats, and the abduction and killing of education and health personnel. As at 31 December, 1,113 schools remained closed, leaving more than 333,000 children out of school.

114. Eight cases of the military use of schools were verified in Mopti, Timbuktu and Gao Regions by the Malian armed forces (4), dozo traditional hunters, HCUA, Congrès pour la justice dans l'Azawad/MNLA, and MAA-Platform (1 each). Two schools continue to be used by the Malian armed forces at the time of writing.

115. A total of 17 children (13 boys, 3 girls, 1 sex unknown), some as young as 6, were abducted by unidentified armed groups (13), FLM (2), dozo traditional hunters and Fulani armed elements (1 each).

116. Responsibility for 129 incidents of denial of humanitarian access remained unattributed, except for one incident each by FLM, GATIA, CMA, the Malian Defence and Security Forces and dozo traditional hunters. Most of the incidents occurred in Gao (34), Mopti (34) and Timbuktu (27) Regions.

Developments and concerns

117. I encourage the Government to continue efforts to strengthen its national legal framework and to finalize the revision of the Child Protection Code, criminalizing the recruitment and use of all children, including those between the ages of 15 and 18. I call upon the Government to reinforce national systems to prevent child recruitment and use in armed forces.

118. I commend the continued collaboration between CMA and the United Nations, including through meetings and workshops to accelerate the implementation by CMA of its action plan. I note that most incidents of child recruitment and use verified in 2019 and attributed to CMA had occurred in previous years. I welcome this and call upon CMA to continue implementing the action plan. I commend the ongoing dialogue between Platform and the United Nations and its commitment to adopt an action plan addressing the recruitment and use of children, as reiterated to my Special Representative, in July, and to the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, in December. I urge the swift adoption and implementation of the plan.

119. I am extremely worried by the rise in child casualties, mostly in central Mali, and urge all parties to take all necessary measures to prevent the killing and maiming of children.

120. I welcome the continued cooperation between the United Nations and Operation Barkhane, and between the United Nations and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, on the protection of children during military operations.

121. I remain concerned by the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups and call upon national authorities and international forces to treat those children primarily as victims and for their detention to be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.

Myanmar

122. The United Nations verified 432 grave violations against 420 children (351 boys, 67 girls, 2 sex unknown).

123. The recruitment and use of 50 children, between the ages of 12 and 17, mainly in Kachin and Shan States, was attributed to armed groups (33) (Kachin Independence Army (KIA) (30), United Wa State Army (2) and Shan State Progress Party/Shan State Army (1)) and the Tatmadaw (17). Of those recruited by the Tatmadaw, nine boys were recruited by the Tatmadaw between 2012 and 2017 and the incidents were verified at a later date, and eight boys were recruited in 2019.

124. The use of 197 children by the Tatmadaw, in functions such as camp maintenance, brick carrying and rice paddy harvesting, some of which were on an intermittent basis, were verified in Rakhine (196) and Kachin (1) States, mostly at the end of 2019.

125. The detention of 18 boys, between the ages of 15 and 17, by the Myanmar Police was verified, for alleged association with Arakan Army (16) in Rakhine State and with Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) (2) in Shan State.

126. The killing (41) and maiming (120) of 161 children (108 boys, 51 girls, 2 sex unknown), some as young as 6 months, were verified. The total includes two child casualties from crossfire, which occurred prior to the reporting period and were verified at a later date. Child casualties occurred in Rakhine (95), Shan (50), Kachin (8), Kayin (4), Kayah and Chin (1 each) States, and in Mandalay and Magway Regions (1 each). While responsibility for 136 casualties was unattributed, 25 incidents were attributed to the Tatmadaw. Most of the casualties resulted from

crossfire (66), anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war (59), shooting (14) and artillery shelling (12).

127. There were 12 attacks on schools, including one attributed to the Tatmadaw that occurred prior to the reporting period and was verified at a later date, in Rakhine (7), Shan (3), Kachin and Chin (1 each) States. The attacks were attributed to the Tatmadaw (8) and the Arakan Army (2). Two attacks occurred during fighting between the Tatmadaw and TNLA. The attacks involved artillery shelling (5), crossfire and looting (3 each) and shooting (1). The United Nations also verified the military use of 51 schools in Rakhine (44) and Shan (7) States attributed to the Tatmadaw (44), a combined force of the Tatmadaw and Border Guard Police (5), and the Border Guard Police (2).

128. The United Nations verified the abduction of 12 children (6 boys, 6 girls), between the ages of 12 and 17, in Shan State by TNLA (6), Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (3) and Restoration Council of Shan State/Shan State Army-South (1), and in Kachin State (2) by KIA.

129. Humanitarian access, particularly in Rakhine, Shan and Kachin States, continued to deteriorate owing to insecurity and unpredictable and onerous governmental travel authorization requirements and processes.

Developments and concerns

130. I welcome the adoption by the Government of the Child Rights Law, criminalizing the six grave violations against children, and the ratification of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict. I urge the Government to ensure their implementation. I note the efforts towards ending child recruitment by the Government, and the Government's initiative to create a national plan to prevent killing and maiming and sexual violence, but I urge the Government to address protection gaps by engaging with the country task force to develop a joint action plan, as requested by my Special Representative.

131. I welcome the release of 59 boys and young men and note the disciplinary action taken against 18 military personnel for not following proper recruitment procedures. I urge the Tatmadaw to continue to collaborate with the United Nations in releasing children in compliance with the joint action plan and in expediting the age verification of the remaining 125 recruits who are believed to be children, identified by the United Nations and the Tatmadaw in their joint action plan. I am concerned by the use of children in Rakhine State and call upon the Tatmadaw to immediately cease this practice. The detention for alleged association with armed groups in contravention of the Child Rights Law is concerning. I call upon the Government to treat children formerly associated with armed groups primarily as victims and detain them only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest possible time.

132. As discussed by my Special Representative during her visit in January 2020, I am alarmed by the sharp increase in the number of incidents of killing and maiming, including by anti-personnel mines, and in the number of attacks on and incidents of the military use of schools. Ongoing grave violations against children are extremely worrisome and I call upon all parties to immediately end violations. I call upon the Government to sign the Safe Schools Declaration and to ratify the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. I urge all parties to take all possible measures to protect civilians, including by demining and marking contaminated areas.

133. I welcome the engagement of the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army, KIA, the Karen National Liberation Army, Karen National Union/Karen National Liberation

Army Peace Council, and the Karenni Army and Shan State Army, with the United Nations, including the release of 25 children (17 boys, 8 girls) by KIA, and urge them to sign joint commitments to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

134. I am extremely worried by persistent access restrictions in some States and call upon all parties to allow access to the United Nations and child protection actors for humanitarian and monitoring purposes.

135. I urge all parties to engage in national peace dialogues and use the "Practical guidance for mediators" to place children at the heart of discussions.

Somalia

136. The United Nations verified 3,709 grave violations against 2,959 children (2,436 boys, 523 girls).

137. The recruitment and use of 1,442 boys and 53 girls was verified, with some children as young as 8. Al-Shabaab remained the main perpetrator (1,169); followed by government security forces, including the Somali Police Force (100) and the Somali National Army (74); and regional forces, including Puntland forces (40), Galmudug forces (30), Jubbaland forces (19), Galmudug police (4) and Jubbaland police (1). Violations were also attributed to clan militia (56) and the Westland militia (2). A total of 300 children were used in support roles such as escorts, guards at checkpoints and for cleaning, and 269 children were used as fighters.

138. A total of 236 children, between the ages of 13 and 17, were detained for alleged association with armed groups by the Somali Police Force (164), the Somali National Army (37), Jubbaland forces (24), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (7) and Galmudug forces (4).

139. A total of 703 children were killed (222) or maimed (481) (518 boys, 185 girls). The casualties were attributed to Al-Shabaab (252); government security forces, including the Somali National Army (43) and the Somali Police Force (35); and regional forces, including Jubbaland forces (19), Galmudug forces (10), Puntland forces (5), Jubbaland police (3), Galmudug police (2) and Southwest forces (1). Violations were also attributed to clan militias (28), the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) (5), the Kenya Defence Forces (3), the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (1) and unidentified armed elements (296). The main causes of child casualties were improvised explosive devices (158), crossfire between armed forces and armed groups (155), gun shots (127) and explosive remnants of war (54).

140. Responsibility for rape and other forms of sexual violence against 227 girls was attributed to government security forces, including the Somali National Army (25) and the Somali Police Force (14), and to regional forces including Jubbaland forces (16), Galmudug forces (5), Southwest forces (3) Puntland forces and Jubbaland police (1 each). Al-Shabaab (26), clan militias (17) and the Westland militia (1) were also responsible for violations. One violation each was attributed to the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and AMISOM, respectively. In 116 cases, perpetrators could not be identified. The cases of sexual violence included rape (148), attempted rape (42), forced marriage (19), sexual harassment (17) and sexual assault (1).

141. A total of 76 attacks on schools (64) and hospitals (12) were attributed to Al-Shabaab (60), government security forces (including Somali National Army (5) and Somali Police Force (1)), clan militia (4), Galmudug forces (2), AMISOM (1) and unidentified perpetrators (2). Incidents included the abduction of teachers and pupils, the killing of and threats against teachers, and the destruction and looting of facilities. In addition, one school was used for military purposes by the Somali Police Force and one health centre was used by clan militias.

142. A total of 1,158 children (1,065 boys, 93 girls) were abducted, the overwhelming majority by Al-Shabaab (1,142), mainly for the purpose of recruitment and use. Other perpetrators include unidentified armed elements (11), Westland militia (4) and clan militias (1).

143. Responsibility for 50 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to Al-Shabaab (22), clan militias (12), unidentified armed elements (6), Galmudug forces (4), Jubbaland forces (2), as well as the National Intelligence and Security Agency, Southwest forces, Puntland police and Puntland administration (1 each). Incidents included threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, the abduction or detention of personnel and beneficiaries, entry restrictions, disruption and looting.

Developments and concerns

144. I welcome the signature between the Federal Government and my Special Representative, in October, of a road map to expedite the implementation of the 2012 action plans on ending and preventing the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children. It includes renewed commitments to protect children, and I call upon the Federal Government to fully implement the commitments, including at the level of the federal member states.

145. High numbers of grave violations committed against children by all parties to conflict in Somalia are concerning, in particular the staggering numbers of child abductions and the recruitment and use of children by Al-Shabaab. Also concerning is the growing number of violations attributed to government security forces, in particular the sharp increase in the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children, as well as sexual violence perpetrated against children and attributed to the Somali Police Force and regional forces, and the detention of children for their actual or alleged association with armed groups. I call upon all parties to immediately cease all violations and abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

146. I urge the Federal Government to treat children formerly associated with armed groups primarily as victims in line with the best interests of the child, according to the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), as endorsed by Somalia, and to fully apply the 2014 standard operating procedures for the handover of children, including at the federal member state level. I urge the Government to fast-track the adoption of legislation, including the child rights bill.

147. I reiterate the recommendations from my report on children and armed conflict in Somalia (S/2020/174).

South Sudan

148. The United Nations verified 270 grave violations against 250 children (188 boys, 62 girls).

149. Responsibility for the recruitment and use of 161 children (149 boys, 12 girls) was attributed to the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO) (80), government security forces (30), including the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (20), South Sudan National Police Service (6) and National Security Services (4). Violations were also attributed to the South Sudan United Front/Army (SSUF/A) (21), the National Salvation Front (NAS) (19), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (SSOA) (10) and the National Democratic Movement (NDM) (1).

150. A total of 51 children (39 boys, 12 girls) were killed (25) and maimed (26). Casualties were attributed to government security forces (12) (including South Sudan

People's Defence Forces (8), South Sudan National Police Service (3) and National Security Services (1)). Casualties were also attributed to NAS (8) and SPLA-IO (1). Among the casualties, 10 children were killed and maimed in crossfire between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and armed groups. Twenty children were affected by explosive remnants of war.

151. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated against 35 girls, and in three cases there were multiple perpetrators. Most of the violations were attributed to the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (23), followed by unknown armed elements (6), SPLA-IO (5) and NAS (1).

152. Three girls were abducted by NAS (2) and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (1).

153. Among 14 attacks on schools (10) and hospitals (4), responsibility was attributed to SPLA-IO (5) and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (1). Seven attacks occurred in the context of crossfire between SPLA-IO and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (6), and between NAS and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (1). The attacks mainly involved the destruction and looting of facilities. In addition, 18 schools and 3 hospitals were used for military purposes by government security forces (17) (including South Sudan People's Defence Forces (15) and National Security Services (2)), followed by SPLA-IO (3) and SSUF/A (1).

154. Six incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to SPLA-IO (3), the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and unidentified armed elements (1 each). One incident occurred in the context of crossfire between the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and NAS. The incidents involved the killing of humanitarian workers, harassment of humanitarian workers, the confiscation of humanitarian assets and the denial of access to clear landmines.

Developments and concerns

155. I welcome the signing by the Government and the United Nations, in February 2020, of the comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all six grave violations and note that in view of the unification of their forces with the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, foreseen in the Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, SPLA-IO and SSOA have bound themselves to this action plan. I call for its full implementation. I welcome the establishment of a Joint Verification Committee in May 2019 composed of the United Nations, the Government, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, SPLA-IO and SSOA. The Committee conducted screenings to identify and release children associated with armed groups and armed forces and conducted awareness-raising on grave violations in 24 barracks of the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, and in SPLA-IO and SSOA cantonments. In cooperation with the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission and the parties to conflict, the United Nations supported the release and reintegration of 280 children, including 76 girls, from the South Sudan National Liberation Movement (201), SPLA-IO (58) and SSUF/A (21).

156. I commend the cooperation between parties to conflict and the United Nations on child protection and in the release of children. I call upon all parties to immediately release all children recruited or abducted and call upon the international community to continue supporting programmes for the reintegration of these children. I remain concerned about continuing grave violations committed in South Sudan, including by emerging armed groups and in the context of intercommunal fighting. I call upon all parties to end violations and urge the Government to ensure accountability.

The Sudan

Darfur

157. The United Nations verified 208 violations against 199 children (123 boys, 76 girls).

158. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of three boys by the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA-AW). The United Nations is in the process of verifying 14 alleged cases of recruitment and use by the Rapid Support Forces.

159. Some 119 children were killed (38) and maimed (81) (103 boys, 16 girls) by unidentified armed elements (71), including 47 casualties caused by explosive remnants of war. The remaining casualties were attributed to government security forces (42) (Rapid Support Forces (19), the General Intelligence Service (formerly National Intelligence and Security Service) (13), joint Sudanese Armed Forces/Rapid Support Forces/Sudan Police Force operations (5) and Sudanese Armed Forces (5)), and SLA-AW (6). Most children were killed and maimed in the context of public demonstrations or during inter-factional fighting between SLA-AW splinter groups.

160. Incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against 59 children (2 boys, 57 girls) were attributed to government security forces (21) (Rapid Support Forces (9), Sudanese Armed Forces (8), Popular Defence Forces and Sudan Police Force (2 each)), the SLA-AW faction of Salih Borsa (4), and unidentified armed elements (34). Children living in camps for internally displaced persons and in remote areas in Jebel Marra remained vulnerable to sexual violence while carrying out livelihood activities, including farming, herding cattle or collecting firewood.

161. Six attacks on schools (2) and hospitals (4) were attributed to SLA-AW (4), joint operations by the Rapid Support Forces and Arab armed elements (1) and unidentified armed elements (1). The military use of nine schools by government security forces (6) (Sudanese Armed Forces (2), Rapid Support Forces (2), Sudan Police Force (1), National Intelligence and Security Service (1)) and by SLA-AW (3) was verified. Five schools that had been used by the Rapid Support Forces (2) and SLA-AW (3) were vacated following United Nations advocacy.

162. The abduction of 18 children (15 boys, 3 girls) was attributed to SLA-AW Salih Borsa (5) and unidentified armed elements (13). Among the armed elements, 11 were described as armed nomads, and they abducted children for ransom or to force them to work as cattle herders.

163. Three incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces (2) and SLA-AW Salih Borsa (1).

South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei

164. Access restrictions hindered monitoring and reporting by the United Nations.

165. One baby was killed by unidentified armed elements in Abyei.

166. Two girls were raped by the Sudanese Armed Forces and unknown armed elements (1 each) in Blue Nile and South Kordofan. In the case attributed to the Sudanese Armed Forces, the perpetrator was arrested and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

167. The military use by the Sudanese Armed Forces of two schools and one hospital in South Kordofan was verified.

Developments and concerns

168. I welcome the opening of humanitarian space from October 2019, thereby allowing the United Nations to visit areas that had been inaccessible since 2011, including areas of Jebel Marra or areas of South Kordofan and Blue Nile controlled by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North.

169. I welcome the engagement by the Government with the United Nations for the screening of 1,346 Rapid Support Forces soldiers in South and West Darfur, during which no child was identified. I further note the command orders issued by the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces prohibiting the recruitment of children.

170. I encourage the Government to further engage with the United Nations on preventative measures for the protection of children so as to sustain the gains of the action plan on ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children, which was completed in 2018. I call upon all parties listed in the annexes to the present report to engage with the United Nations on action plans or renew their engagement with the United Nations in order to continue the implementation of action plans, including through time-bound road maps. I call upon all parties to take into account child protection in the ongoing peace process.

171. I remain concerned about grave violations committed in the Sudan, especially incidents of killing and maiming and sexual violence. I call upon the Government to refrain from the excessive use of force against children, and to ensure accountability for the perpetrators of grave violations. I further encourage all parties to fully cooperate with demining efforts.

Syrian Arab Republic

172. The United Nations verified 2,638 violations affecting 2,292 children (1,612 boys, 401 girls, 279 sex unknown).

173. The recruitment and use of 820 children (765 boys, 55 girls) was verified, 798 of whom served in combat and 147 of whom were below the age of 15. Cases were attributed to the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) (283) under the umbrella of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham led by Nusrah Front (245), Syrian armed opposition groups (formerly known as the Free Syrian Army)[10] (191), Ahrar al-Sham (26), other components of SDF (23), the Internal Security Forces (ISF) (22), unidentified armed groups (11), Syrian government forces (10), pro-government militia (5), Nur al-Din al-Zanki (3) and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) (1). Most cases occurred in Aleppo, Idlib and Raqqah. In addition, within the framework of the action plan signed in June 2019 with SDF, 51 girls were released.

174. At least 218 children (216 boys, 2 girls) were detained or deprived of liberty for their alleged association with opposing parties, by YPG/YPJ (194) under the umbrella of SDF, ISF (20), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (2) and Syrian government forces (2). In October, the United Nations verified the deprivation of liberty of 150 boys, some as young as 9, of Syrian nationality and of at least 22 other nationalities, by YPG/YPJ under the umbrella of SDF, for alleged association with ISIL.

175. The killing (897) and maiming (557) of 1,454 children (834 boys, 342 girls, 278 sex unknown) were verified, with 678 of the violations occurring in Idlib. Half of the casualties were attributed to government and pro-government forces (723) (including government and pro-government air forces (487), government forces and

[10] Formerly referred to as groups self-affiliated with the Free Syrian Army.

pro-government militias (231) and government forces (5)), unidentified perpetrators (580), Operation Peace Spring[11] (65), YPG/YPJ (21) under the umbrella of SDF, ISIL (23), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (14), the international counter-ISIL coalition (11), Syrian armed opposition groups (10), other components of SDF (6) and ISF (1). The casualties mainly resulted from air strikes (515), shelling (332), unexploded ordnance (301) and attacks with the use of improvised explosive devices (165). The last quarter of 2019 witnessed a significant spike in the number of high-casualty incidents during military escalations in north-western and north-eastern parts of the country.

176. Sexual violence perpetrated against children and attributed to parties remained underreported. The United Nations verified 11 cases of sexual violence against girls in detention by government forces, which occurred in previous years and were verified at a later date.

177. There were a total of 262 attacks on schools (157) and hospitals (105), including on protected personnel, attributed to the Syrian government and pro-government forces (226) (including government and pro-government air forces (147), government forces and pro-government militias (75) and government forces (4)), unidentified perpetrators (14), Operation Peace Spring (6), Syrian armed opposition groups (5), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (5), ISIL (3), YPG/YPJ and other components of SDF (2), international counter-ISIL coalition (1). The majority of those attacks (192) occurred in Idlib, with most involving air strikes (158), shelling (50), explosions of unknown nature (34) and attacks using improvised explosive devices (6).

178. Some 32 schools and 2 medical facilities were used for military purposes by YPG/YPJ (17), government forces (10), ISF (3), other components of SDF (1)and Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1), mainly in Hasakah (22).

179. The abduction of 17 children (12 boys, 4 girls, 1 sex unknown) was attributed to YPG/YPJ (8), other components of SDF (1) and ISF (1), Syrian armed opposition groups (4) and government forces (3). In the majority of incidents, children were abducted owing to the alleged affiliation of relatives with opposing groups or as a precursor to their recruitment.

180. A total of 84 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access included attacks on water facilities (46), incidents of the removal or blocking of humanitarian supplies (21) and attacks on humanitarian facilities, transports and personnel (17). The incidents were attributed to government and pro-government forces (58) (including government forces and pro-government militias (30), government and pro-government air forces (26) and government forces (2)), unidentified perpetrators (10), YPG/YPJ (3), self-administration in northern and eastern Syrian Arab Republic (7), Operation Peace Spring (3), ISF (1), Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1) and the Syrian Salvation Government (1).

Developments and concerns

181. I welcome the commitment by SDF to the action plan signed in June 2019 with my Special Representative and the progress in its implementation, in particular the issuance of a military order reiterating the prohibition of recruitment of children, the establishment of an implementation committee, the training of 100 commanders, the appointment of senior focal points and the release of 30 children in 2019 and 51 girls in early 2020, as well as the separation of 18 boys awaiting formal release. I further welcome the fact that United Nations child protection partners were granted access to Centre Houry in Hasakah, which mainly houses Syrian children formerly associated

[11] Turkish forces and Syrian armed groups operate in the context of Operation Peace Spring.

with ISIL as so-called “cubs of the caliphate”. I note that the start of Operation Peace Spring in October 2019 affected the implementation of the action plan.

182. I note the dialogue between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the United Nations on non-military use of schools to implement the recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, including recommendations concerning the recruitment and use of children. I call upon the Government to engage with the United Nations in Damascus and with my Special Representative to strengthen the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through the signature of dedicated joint action plans for which the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic is listed.

183. I am appalled by the persistent high levels of all grave violations endured by children and perpetrated by all parties in the country, including by government and pro-government forces. I am particularly disturbed by the increase in the number of attacks against schools and hospitals. I am extremely concerned by the drastic increase in the detention of children on security-related charges. The rising number of incidents of the denial of humanitarian access and emerging trend of attacks on water facilities are also concerning. I urge all parties to take all necessary measures to better protect children in armed conflict, including precautionary measures to mitigate child casualties, and to protect schools and health facilities in the conduct of military operations.

184. I reiterate my call upon all concerned countries that have not already done so, to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of foreign women and children with suspected family ties to ISIL who are currently in camps in the north-east of the country, in line with international law principles, including the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for the best interests of the child.

Yemen

185. The United Nations verified 4,042 grave violations against 2,159 children (1,708 boys, 451 girls).

186. The recruitment and use of 686 children (643 boys, 43 girls) was attributed to the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (482), Yemeni armed forces (136), Security Belt Forces (41), Shabwani Elite Forces (14), unidentified armed elements (7), popular committees (4), a Salafist armed group and Hirak Southern Movement (1 each). Most children served in combat roles (514), 19 per cent of whom were below the age of 15.

187. The United Nations verified the deprivation of liberty and/or detention of 97 boys between the ages of 12 and 16, by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (68), Yemeni armed forces (26) and the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen (3) for their alleged association with opposing parties. Children were held for periods ranging from six months to three years. Among those children, 25 were captured and detained by the Coalition and handed over to the Government of Yemen, who further detained them before releasing them into an interim care centre in Ma’rib in October 2019. A total of 93 children were released as of January 2020, including the 68 who had been held by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis).

188. Killing (395) and maiming (1,052) of 1,447 children (1,041 boys, 406 girls) was attributed to the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (313), the Coalition (222), the Yemeni armed forces (96), popular committees (40), Security Belt Forces (11), Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula (5) and ISIL (2). Responsibility for 482 child casualties could not be attributed and a further 276 casualties occurred during crossfire between various parties to the conflict. Of the total number of casualties, 865 resulted from ground fighting, 306 from landmines and explosive

remnants of war, 171 from air strikes, and 68 from bombs, including suicide and attacks with the use of improvised explosive devices. Hudaydah, Ta‘izz and Dali‘ Governorates were the most affected.

189. Incidents of sexual violence against three boys by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) and one girl by the Yemeni armed forces, between the ages of 12 and 16, were verified. The lack of access to conflict-affected areas, stigma and the fear of retaliation remain reasons for underreporting of this violation.

190. There were 35 attacks on schools (20) and hospitals (15). The attacks were attributed to the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (15), the Yemeni armed forces (6), the Coalition (4), Security Belt Forces (2) and Shabwani Elite Forces (1). Responsibility for four attacks could not be attributed and three occurred in the context of confrontations between the Yemeni armed forces and popular committees (2) and between the Yemeni armed forces and the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (1). Most attacks occurred in Dali‘ (15) and Ta‘izz (13) Governorates.

191. The military use of 37 schools was attributed to the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (35), the popular committees (1) and an unidentified armed group (1). The military use of three hospitals by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (2) and the Yemeni armed forces (1) was also verified.

192. The United Nations verified the abduction of 22 children (21 boys, 1 girl) by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (19), Security Belt Forces (2) and popular committees (1). In most cases, children were used for recruitment, while the girl was abducted for marriage.

193. A total of 1,848 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) (1,553), the Coalition (186) and the Yemeni armed forces and other components of the Government (109). This represents a dramatic increase from the figure recorded for 2018 and involved restrictions of movements within the country, interference with the delivery of humanitarian assistance, violence against humanitarian personnel, assets and facilities, and restrictions of movement into the country. Denials were prevalent in Sana’a and Amanat Al-Asimah Governorates, followed by governorates adjacent to active frontlines, including Hudaydah, Ibb, Hajjah and Sa‘dah.

Developments and concerns

194. I welcome the continued commitment of the Government of Yemen to protect conflict-affected children, including through its interim care centre in Ma’rib, through which children are reunited with their families, and I encourage further efforts, including the adoption of a handover protocol on the release of children. The implementation of its action plan and road map progressed in the first half of 2019, with the appointment of 90 child protection focal points within the Yemeni armed forces, 40 of whom were trained to identify associated children. That progress stalled, however, in August 2019, with tensions erupting between the Government and the southern transitional council. In this context, the political directive issued by the President in February 2020, instructing all forces to comply with the action plan and road map, is welcomed.

195. I commend the endorsement of a programme of time-bound activities by the Coalition, through an exchange of letters with my Special Representative, in order to support the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed in March 2019. I am encouraged by the efforts demonstrated in the context of the memorandum and call upon the Coalition to expedite the implementation of agreed activities, including accountability provisions. I note the decrease in child casualties attributed to the Coalition in 2019.

196. I am encouraged by the ongoing dialogue with the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) to develop an action plan to end and prevent violations for which they are listed, and the military use of schools. I note that a senior focal point and technical committee were appointed and that a directive for the handover of children captured and/or detained during military operations was signed in April 2020. I welcome the release of 68 children detained for association with opposition parties by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) in early 2020 and urge that their reintegration be prioritized.

197. I am extremely worried, however, about the rise in the overall number of grave violations, including the continued recruitment of children by parties to conflict, and in particular by the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis), and the shrinking space for humanitarians in Yemen.

198. I urge all parties to abide by their obligations and responsibilities under international law and to take all measures necessary to end and prevent violations and facilitate humanitarian access to children.

199. I welcome the progress made towards ending the conflict that is the cause of this suffering. I urge all parties to continue their negotiations to bring lasting peace to Yemen.

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

India

200. The United Nations verified the killing (8) and maiming (7) of 15 children (13 boys, 2 girls), between the ages of 1 and 17, by or during joint operations of the Central Reserve Police Force, the Indian Army (Rashtriya Rifles) and the Special Operations Group of the Jammu and Kashmir Police (10), Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (1), unidentified armed elements (1), or during shelling across the line of control (3). The casualties that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir were mainly caused by torture in detention, shootings, including from pellet guns, and cross-border shelling.

201. The United Nations verified attacks on nine schools in Jammu and Kashmir by unidentified elements.

202. Of concern, 68 children between the ages of 9 and 17 have been detained by Indian security services in Jammu and Kashmir on national security-related charges, including 1 for actual or alleged association with armed groups.

203. In Jharkhand State, approximately 10 children were reportedly rescued by Indian police from Naxalite insurgency groups, who allegedly abducted them or used them in support or combat capacities.

Developments and concerns

204. I remain concerned by child casualties in Jammu and Kashmir and call upon the Government to take preventive measures to protect children, including by ending the use of pellets against children. I am concerned by the detention of children, including their arrest during night raids, internment at army camps, torture in detention and detention without charge or due process, and urge the Government to immediately end this practice. I note that the Government conducted age verification for some detainees and urge for its systematization. I note the decline, as a result of government efforts, in the number of reports of child recruitment and of the killing and maiming of children relating to the Naxalite insurgency. However, children's access to education and health services continues to be of concern owing to this insurgency, in

particular in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand States. I am concerned by attacks on schools, yet I am encouraged that the Government has commenced legal proceedings against the perpetrators.

205. I reiterate my encouragement to the Government to put in place national preventive and accountability measures for all grave violations, as soon as possible.

Nigeria

206. The United Nations verified 788 grave violations against 733 children (596 boys, 131 girls, 6 sex unknown).

207. Responsibility for the recruitment and use of 46 children (28 boys, 18 girls), between the ages of 13 and 17, was attributed to Boko Haram (33) and the Nigerian Security Forces (13). The Nigerian Security Forces used children for menial jobs at military checkpoints. In addition, 516 children (458 boys, 58 girls) were verified at a later date as having been recruited and used by the Civilian Joint Task Force (CJTF) between 2013 and 2017. No new recruitment and use by CJTF has verified beyond 2017, when the action plan was signed with the United Nations. Furthermore, Boko Haram recruited and used 71 children in the Far North Region of Cameroon, 36 in the Niger and 8 in Chad.

208. The Nigerian authorities released 160 children (158 boys, 2 girls) from military detention following their arrest for alleged association with Boko Haram. The United Nations was unable to verify the number of children still in detention, as access to detention facilities was denied.

209. A total of 120 children (95 boys, 25 girls), between the ages of 11 and 17, were killed (56) and maimed (64) by Boko Haram (105), unidentified perpetrators (7), the Islamic State West Africa Province and the Nigerian Security Forces (3 each) and CJTF (1). One casualty occurred during crossfire between the Nigerian Security Forces and Boko Haram. Of the total child casualties attributed to Boko Haram, 41 were due to explosions of improvised explosive devices borne by civilians, including 9 children who were used as carriers. In addition, 103 child casualties in the Far North Region of Cameroon, 13 in the Niger and 3 in Chad were attributed to Boko Haram (109), government forces (9) and unidentified armed elements (1).

210. Sexual violence perpetrated by Boko Haram affected 30 girls, between the ages of 12 and 16, including 23 who were abducted and subsequently raped or forcibly married to Boko Haram elements. Furthermore, five girls were subjected to sexual violence in Chad and the Niger, two of whom were attacked by Boko Haram.

211. A total of 15 attacks on schools (4) and hospitals (11) were attributed to Boko Haram in Nigeria. Furthermore, Boko Haram attacked one school and seven hospitals in the Diffa Region of the Niger, and one school and one hospital in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Unidentified armed elements attacked one hospital in the Niger.

212. Responsibility for the abduction of 44 children (15 boys, 23 girls, 6 sex unknown), between the ages of 11 and 17, was attributed to Boko Haram. In addition, children were abducted in the Niger (67), Cameroon (49) and Chad (5) by Boko Haram (104) and unidentified perpetrators (17).

213. There were 17 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access attributed to Boko Haram (12), Islamic State West Africa Province (3) and the Nigerian Security Forces (2). Incidents included the killing and abduction of humanitarians by Boko Haram. Separately, two unattributed incidents were verified in the Niger.

Developments and concerns

214. I welcome the constructive role played by the Government in support of the United Nations engagement with CJTF under the 2017 action plan on ending and preventing the recruitment and use of children. As a result, of the thousands of children released from CJTF, 1,355 children (1,138 boys, 217 girls) attended ceremonies marking their separation from the group in 2019. I encourage the authorities to ensure the reintegration of released children and further encourage CJTF to complete the implementation of its action plan.

215. While the release of 160 children from detention is encouraging, I am concerned about the children remaining in detention for their alleged association with Boko Haram. I reiterate my call upon Nigerian authorities to treat all children formerly associated with armed groups as victims, with detention as a last resort, and to release all children in its custody. I urge the Nigerian authorities to adopt a handover protocol for the handing over of children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors, and to provide access for the United Nations to all detained children.

216. The brutality of grave violations perpetrated by Boko Haram in north-east Nigeria and the Lake Chad Basin region remains a grave concern, notably the continued use of children, particularly girls, as carriers of improvised explosive devices, and I request my Special Representative to promote enhanced monitoring capacity in the Lake Chad Basin. I urge Boko Haram to immediately cease all violations against children.

Pakistan

217. A total of 23 children (2 boys, 4 girls, 17 sex unknown) were reportedly killed (5) and injured (18) during armed clashes or by shelling or targeted fire across the line of control (10), by improvised explosive devices (3) and explosive remnants of war (10) in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, Punjab, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces. Responsibility could not be attributed for any of those casualties.

218. Three attacks against schools (2) and hospitals (1) were reported, but responsibility was not attributed. The two schools in Pakistan-administered Kashmir were reportedly attacked across the line of control. The hospital in Balochistan Province was attacked with the use of an improvised explosive device. The Global Polio Eradication Initiative reported over 660 attacks or threats of attacks against its staff and facilities, mostly in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Provinces.

Developments and concerns

219. I welcome the Government's continued efforts to protect the workers who are conducting the polio campaign. I note the decrease in the number of attacks against schools and in the number of child casualties, but call upon the Government to continue preventive measures to protect children, especially around the line of control. I reiterate my call for the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration and to protect schools.

Philippines

220. The United Nations verified 79 grave violations against 67 children (42 boys, 25 girls).

221. The recruitment and use of 18 children (14 boys, 4 girls), between the ages of 15 and 17, were attributed to armed groups, namely the New People's Army (NPA)

(12), ISIL-inspired armed groups (5) and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (1), in Maguindanao, Quezon and North Cotabato Provinces.

222. The United Nations verified the detention of 35 children (13 boys, 22 girls), some as young as 11, arrested by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (5), the Philippine National Police (2) and during joint operations of the armed forces and the police (28), for alleged association with armed groups, and detained for periods ranging from 1 day to 10 months. Two boys aged 15 and 16 were still in police custody as at December 2019, having been arrested in August and September 2019 in Basilan and North Cotabato Provinces.

223. The killing (12) and maiming (37) of 49 children (28 boys, 21 girls), some as young as 1 year old, were attributed to Abu Sayyaf Group (10), Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (15) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines (4), including in Maguindanao and Sulu (18 each), North Cotabato (4), Negros Occidental, Basilan, Lanao del Sur and Sorsogon (2 each) and Misamis Oriental (1) Provinces. Responsibility for 20 casualties could not be attributed. Over half of the children were victims of explosive remnants of war and the use of improvised explosive devices (25) in Cotabato City and Sulu Province.

224. No incidents of rape or other forms of sexual violence could be verified, although information was received pertaining to such incidents.

225. There were 12 attacks on schools and protected personnel, as well as threats against 20 teachers, including an indigenous teacher. Attacks were attributed to the Philippine National Police (3), unidentified armed elements (2) and NPA (1), while 6 attacks occurred during crossfire between the Armed Forces of the Philippines and NPA (4) and between the armed forces and Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters (2). In addition, two schools and one health centre were used by the armed forces during military operations in Maguindanao Province. Of concern, threats against schools run by non-governmental organizations in indigenous communities and harassment of their personnel and students by government security forces and paramilitary groups triggered an escalation of violence, notably in Mindanao, North Cotabato and Davao del Norte Provinces.

226. No incidents of the abduction of children nor of the denial of humanitarian access were verified. The monitoring and verification of violations was impeded by access restrictions, due to the volatile security situation and restricted freedom of movement imposed under martial law in Mindanao, thrice extended since 2017. Verification in some areas was limited owing to a lack of trained capacity.

Developments and concerns

227. I commend the adoption in June 2019 by the Government of the Implementing Rules and Regulations for the Law on Children in Situations of Armed Conflict. I urge the Government to swiftly disseminate and implement those domestic legal obligations. I am concerned about the increased detention of children due to joint operations of the armed forces and the police and I urge the Government to implement existing national protocols and standards on children arrested and detained for alleged association with armed groups.

228. I am encouraged by the inauguration of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority in March 2019, marking the culmination of the peace process between the Government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front. I call upon the Bangsamoro Transition Authority to continue to implement the peace agreement and use the lessons learned and best practices collected by the United Nations Children's Fund in the Philippines and by my Special Representative to end and prevent violations against children. I welcome the lifting of martial law in the region after almost three years.

229. Improvised explosive devices and explosive remnants of war continue to kill and maim children. I call upon the Government to implement the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction and to prioritize the drafting of legislation providing compensation for destroyed and damaged houses.

230. I remain concerned about persistent attacks and threats on schools and protected personnel, particularly in indigenous communities. I urge the Government to comply with the "National policy framework on learners and schools as zones of peace" issued in November 2019 by the Department of Education. I reiterate my call upon the Government to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration.

IV. Recommendations

231. I welcome the enhanced engagement by parties to conflict, notably Governments and non-State actors, with the United Nations to develop and implement action plans and other commitments to protect children in armed conflict. I reiterate my call upon Member States to continue supporting the implementation of action plans and commitments, including by facilitating United Nations engagement with non-State actors. I call upon the Security Council to ensure that child protection provisions are included in all relevant mandates of United Nations operations, including peacekeeping and special political missions. I request my Special Representative to engage with parties on action plans and strengthen the monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict in coordination with United Nations system entities.

232. I call upon Member States to respect the rights of the child, including through accession 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, and the endorsement and implementation of the Paris Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers.

233. I am concerned by the continued high level of verified grave violations committed against children. I call upon all parties to fully comply with international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law. I call upon all parties to immediately end and prevent grave violations, including through mitigation measures, appropriate orders and training on preventing violations.

234. I call for the adoption and implementation of legislation to criminalize grave violations against children. I encourage Member States to proactively ensure strong national accountability measures, and to cooperate with relevant 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, and for the implementation thereof.

235. I am deeply concerned at the growing number of children in detention, and I reiterate that this should only be used as a measure of last resort, and for the shortest possible period of time, and that alternatives to detention should be prioritized whenever possible. I urge Member States to treat children allegedly associated with armed forces or groups, including groups designated as terrorist by the United Nations, primarily as victims, and to give child protection actors full access to these children. I call upon all concerned Member States that have not already done so to take steps for the voluntary repatriation of children stranded in conflict zones, in line with international law principles and standards. I encourage parties to adopt standard

operating procedures for the handover and release of all children detained in order to facilitate their reintegration and, when applicable, repatriation.

236. I call upon all parties to allow safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access, in order to provide assistance to children, and to ensure the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets. Parties to conflict should order that humanitarian assistance and protection services for children be allowed and facilitated, and humanitarian deliveries protected.

237. I enjoin the donor community to address funding gaps for the reintegration of children, including by ensuring long-term alternatives to military life, providing education and long-term reintegration support, including psychosocial and mental health services, as well as funding for monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children. I further ask that the specific needs of girls and of children with disabilities be prioritized in such programmes.

238. I encourage Member States and regional organizations to strengthen child protection capacities and to engage with the United Nations in order to develop strategies to prevent grave violations.

V. Lists contained in the annexes to the present report

239. There will be no new listing for 2019. In my previous report (A/73/907-S/2019/509), I requested my Special Representative to further examine cases in a number of situations, however, unforeseen delays due to political and security developments were encountered. In the case of Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, delays were caused by multiple electoral processes ongoing throughout late 2019 and early 2020 and the subsequent closures caused by the impact of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in the region. My Special Representative is continuing to dialogue with parties until such an examination can be completed; meanwhile, I urge all parties, in particular the Israeli forces, to refrain from the use of violence against children and to put in place measures that will prevent these violations from occurring in the first place.

240. In Myanmar, the Tatmadaw will continue to be listed under section A of annex I for the violations of sexual violence and killing and maiming. The Tatmadaw will be delisted for the violation of recruitment and use, following a continued significant decrease in recruitment, ongoing prosecutions and an agreement to continue to trace and release cases that were identified in previous years. The delisting with respect to recruitment and use is conditioned on the immediate ending and preventing of the ad hoc use of children in non-combat roles. A continued United Nations monitoring and engagement period of 12 months will ensure the sustainability of all existing measures, including the prevention of use of children, as verified by the United Nations, and continued engagement with my Special Representative. Any failure in this regard would result in a relisting for the same violation in my next report. In Yemen, the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen will be delisted for the violation of killing and maiming, following a sustained significant decrease in killing and maiming due to air strikes and the signature and implementation of the programme of time-bound activities to support the implementation of the memorandum of understanding signed in March 2019. A continued United Nations monitoring and engagement period of 12 months will ensure the sustained implementation of the programme of time-bound activities and the further decrease in the number of affected children as verified by the United Nations. Any failure in this regard would result in a relisting for the same violation in my next report.

241. Other modifications to the list have resulted from changes in the landscape of armed conflict in the respective situations or changes in measures taken by parties to protect children. In this regard, in the Central African Republic, Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique, both part of the former Séléka coalition, will be listed in section B of annex I in recognition of the measures put in place within their respective action plans. Similarly, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kamuina Nsapu and Mai-Mai Mazembe will be listed in section B of annex I for their existing violations, while Raia Mutomboki will be listed in section B of annex I but only with regard to their listing for recruitment and use and abduction, following their respective engagement with the United Nations through signed commitments. In Myanmar, the Karen National Liberation Army will be listed in section B of annex I, as a result of their enhanced engagement to end the recruitment and use of children within their ranks. In South Sudan, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army-in-Opposition – pro-Machar will move to section B of annex I as a result of their engagement with and endorsement of the comprehensive action plan to end and prevent all six violations, signed in February 2020 between the United Nations and the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces, and as a result of the measures taken to release children.

242. Modifications to terminology and to names of parties resulted from changes on the ground and are aimed at reflecting the name of parties more accurately. In Somalia, the Somali National Army is now listed as the Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces, and includes the Somali Police Force, remaining on list B of annex I, conditioned on their timely implementation of the October 2019 road map to expedite the implementation of the 2012 action plans on ending and preventing the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children and on the immediate application of the road map to the Somali Police Force, which is now included in the action plans. In the Syrian Arab Republic, the groups self-affiliated with the Free Syrian Army are now listed as Syrian armed opposition groups (formerly known as the Free Syrian Army). In Yemen, the Houthis will be listed as the Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis) and, owing to recent command orders to stop the recruitment and use of children and to release children, and to enhanced dialogue with the United Nations, will be listed in section B of annex I for recruitment and use, while remaining listed under section A of annex I for killing and maiming and for attacks on schools and hospitals.

243. In view of the gravity and number of violations reported and, where possible, verified in Cameroon (recruitment and use, killing and maiming, abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access) and in Burkina Faso (attacks on schools, and killing and maiming) during 2019, both countries will be added as situations of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report.

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. Haqqani Network[a,b]
2. Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar[a,b]
3. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province[a,b,d]
4. Taliban forces and affiliated groups[a,b,d,e]

Parties in Colombia

Non-State actors

Ejército de Liberación Nacional[a]

Parties in the Central African Republic

Non-State actors

1. Local defence 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. Allied Democratic Forces[a,b,d,e]
2. Bana Mura militias[c,e]
3. Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi[a,c,d,e]
4. Force de résistance patriotique de l'Ituri[a,c,d,e]
5. Lord's Resistance Army[a,b,c,e]
6. Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain[a]
7. Union des patriotes congolais pour la paix (also known as Mai-Mai Lafontaine)[a]

* 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 Simba[a,c]
9. Nduma défense du Congo[a,b]
10. Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové[a,b]
11. Nyatura[a,c,e]
12. Raia Mutomboki[c]

Parties in Iraq

Non-State actors

Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant[a,b,c,d,e]

Parties in Mali

Non-State actors

1. Ansar Eddine[a,c]
2. Mouvement pour l'unification et le jihad en Afrique de l'Ouest[a,c]
3. Platform, including affiliated groups[a]

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[a,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

1. Ahrar al-Sham[a,b]
2. Syrian armed opposition groups (formerly known as the Free Syrian Army)[a]
3. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant[a,b,c,d,e]
4. Army of Islam[a]
5. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham led by Nusrah Front (Levant Liberation Organization)[a,b]

Parties in Yemen

Non-State actors

1. Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis)[b,d]
2. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula[a]
3. Pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees[a]
4. 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 Afghanistan

State actors

Afghan National Police, including the Afghan Local Police[a,f]

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]

Non-State actors

1. Kamuina Nsapu[a,d,e,f]
2. Mai-Mai Mazembe[a,b,e,f]
3. Raia Mutomboki[a,e,f]

Parties in Iraq

State actors

Popular Mobilization Forces[a]

Parties in Mali

Non-State actors

Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad[a,c,f]

Parties in Myanmar

Non-State actors

1. Democratic Karen Benevolent Army[a]
2. Kachin Independence Army[a]
3. Karenni Army[a]
4. Karen National Liberation Army Peace Council[a]
5. Shan State Army[a]
6. Karen National Liberation Army[a]

Parties in Somalia

State actors

Somali Federal Defence and Police Forces[a,b,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,d,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

Non-State actors

Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ)[a,f]

Parties in Yemen

State actors

Government forces, including the Yemeni armed forces[a,f]

Non-State actors

Houthis/Ansar Allah (previously the Houthis)[a]

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 Nigeria

Non-State actors

Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad, also known as Boko Haram[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

Parties in Nigeria

Non-State actors

Civilian Joint Task Force[a,f]

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* 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).