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Seventy-eighth year****Promotion and protection of the rights of children:  
promotion and protection of the rights of children****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 2022, is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution [2427 \(2018\)](#). The report includes trends regarding the impact of armed conflict on children and information on violations committed, as requested by the Council in its resolution [1612 \(2005\)](#) and subsequent resolutions.<sup>1</sup> 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 perpetrated against children, attacks on schools, hospitals and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals,<sup>2</sup> and the abduction of children.

2. The information contained in the present report was vetted for accuracy by the United Nations. Where information is not verified, it is qualified as such. Where incidents were committed earlier but verified only in 2022, that information is qualified as relating to an incident that was verified at a later date. The information does not represent the full scale of violations against children, but provides United Nations-verified trends in grave violations against children, given that access for

<sup>1</sup> See also the relevant reports of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in specific country situations, in particular in the Democratic Republic of the Congo ([S/2022/745](#)), Iraq ([S/2022/46](#)), Mali ([S/2022/856](#)), Nigeria ([S/2022/596](#)), the Philippines ([S/2022/569](#)), Somalia ([S/2022/397](#)) and the Sudan ([S/2022/627](#)), and the report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict to the Human Rights Council on children and armed conflict ([A/HRC/52/60](#)).

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of the present report, the phrase “protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals”, used in Security Council resolutions [1998 \(2011\)](#), [2143 \(2014\)](#) and [2147 \(2018\)](#), as well as in the statements by the President of the Security Council of 17 June 2013 ([S/PRST/2013/8](#)) and 31 October 2017 ([S/PRST/2017/21](#)), refers to teachers, doctors, other educational personnel, students and patients.



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

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

## **II. Situation of children and armed conflict**

### **A. Overview of trends and patterns**

4. In 2022, children continued to be disproportionately affected by armed conflict, and the number of children verified as affected by grave violations increased compared with 2021. The United Nations verified 27,180 grave violations, of which 24,300 were committed in 2022 and 2,880 were committed earlier but verified only in 2022. Violations affected 18,890 children (13,469 boys, 4,638 girls, 783 sex unknown) in 24 situations and one regional monitoring arrangement. The highest numbers of violations were the killing (2,985) and maiming (5,655) of 8,631 children, followed by the recruitment and use of 7,622 children and the abduction of 3,985 children. Children were detained for actual or alleged association with armed groups (2,496), including those designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations, or for national security reasons.

5. My Special Representative and the United Nations made progress in engaging with parties to protect children in Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Israel and the State of Palestine, Nigeria, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Engagement with parties to conflict resulted in positive changes for children. More than 12,460 children formerly associated with armed forces or groups received protection or reintegration support during 2022.

6. Multidimensional conflicts, including across regions, chronic crises and new armed actors have had an adverse impact on children's lives. Hostilities spreading into new areas contributed to an increase in grave violations of 140 per cent in Myanmar. The splintering of armed groups and intercommunal violence affected children, contributing to a 135 per cent increase in grave violations in South Sudan. An upsurge in the activity of armed groups, including those designated by the United Nations as terrorist groups, caused severe deterioration of the situation in the central Sahel, in particular in Burkina Faso, leading to an 85 per cent increase in grave violations. Grave violations also increased in Colombia, Israel and the State of

Palestine, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, the Sudan and the Syrian Arab Republic. In contrast, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic and the Philippines saw a decrease in grave violations. The signing of the truce in Yemen contributed to a 40 per cent decrease in violations, underlining the importance of peace in achieving security for children.

7. The highest numbers of grave violations were verified in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Israel and the State of Palestine, Somalia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Yemen. The monitoring and verification of grave violations remained extremely challenging, including owing to access constraints, leading to the underreporting of such violations and an increase in violations verified in 2022. Verified cases of conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated against children (1,165 children) decreased by 12 per cent, but such violence continued to be vastly underreported owing to stigmatization, fear of reprisals, harmful social norms, the absence or lack of access to services, impunity and safety concerns, as also reported in my report on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2023/413).

8. The denial of humanitarian access<sup>3</sup> remained very high, with 3,931 verified incidents. The situation is expected to worsen with the adoption of restrictive laws, decrees and regulations increasing control over humanitarian work and workers, notably in Afghanistan, Myanmar and parts of Yemen. Verified incidents of recruitment and use increased by 21 per cent, abductions by 15 per cent and killing and by maiming 5 per cent. The use of live ammunition against children and the excessive use of force increased, in particular in Israel and the State of Palestine and Myanmar.

9. There was a 112 per cent increase in attacks on schools (1,163) and hospitals (647), in particular in Ukraine, Burkina Faso, Israel and the State of Palestine, Myanmar, Mali and Afghanistan.

10. While non-State armed groups were responsible for 50 per cent of grave violations, government forces were the main perpetrator of the killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access.

11. Gender norms shaped the exposure of children to grave violations. Boys continued to be more affected by recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction, while girls were disproportionately affected by conflict-related sexual violence. While the verified number of girls facing grave violations decreased, it increased for boys. Gender, age and disability were among the many factors shaping the vulnerability of children to grave violations.

## **B. Challenges and the way forward**

12. Blatant and systematic disregard for international humanitarian law and international human rights law continues to severely affect the protection of children. Among factors having the most severe impact was the use of explosive weapons, including those with a wide impact area, notably in populated areas, such as Gaza, the Syrian Arab Republic, Ukraine and Yemen, which led to greater child casualties and damaged schools and hospitals, depriving children of education and health services. The use of explosive ordnance, including explosive remnants of war, improvised explosive devices and landmines, represented some 26 per cent of the methods used in the killing and maiming of children. Mine action operations are

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<sup>3</sup> 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 reflect the full humanitarian access situation in the countries concerned.

challenged and disrupted by insecurity and restrictions on movement and access. Ensuring safety, security and access for mine action operations, child-sensitive explosive ordnance risk education and victim assistance must be prioritized, in particular in Afghanistan, Iraq, Myanmar, Somalia, South Sudan, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. In addition, children with disabilities are more vulnerable at the time of armed conflict and are likely to face stigma and discrimination and to lack access to basic services.

13. The adoption of protocols for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian protection actors is a critical tool to standardize operating procedures and strengthen coordination between military and civilian actors. Subsequently, children can gain access to adequate age- and gender-sensitive and survivor-centred reintegration and assistance programmes. Handover protocols were adopted in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and the Philippines. Support must continue to fund reintegration programmes for children separated from armed groups, notably in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, the Sudan and Yemen. Progress was also made by countries concerned in the repatriation of children to countries of origin, notably from the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for family unity and the best interests of the child.

### III. Information on grave violations

#### A. Situations on the agenda of the Security Council

##### Afghanistan

14. The United Nations verified 1,797 grave violations against 970 children (783 boys, 187 girls) and 14 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 494 boys by the Taliban that had occurred in previous years.

15. The recruitment and use of 54 children (53 boys, 1 girl) by the Taliban (38), the National Resistance Front (15) and unidentified perpetrators (1) were verified. Children were used in combat (32) and support roles (22).

16. A total of 69 boys were detained by the Taliban for alleged association with the National Resistance Front. Of those, 29 were released and 2 died in custody.

17. The United Nations verified the killing (253) and maiming (656) of 909 children (732 boys, 177 girls), attributed to unidentified perpetrators (694), Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan (ISIL-KP) (112), the Taliban (98) and cross-border shelling from Pakistan (5). Casualties resulted mainly from explosive ordnance (718) and targeted killings (26).

18. Sexual violence perpetrated against 13 children (2 boys, 11 girls) by the Taliban (7), unidentified perpetrators (5) and former pro-government militia (1) were verified in the central (11), northern (1) and southern (1) regions. Cases involved rape (9), forced marriage (3) and *bacha bazi* (1).<sup>4</sup>

19. The United Nations verified 95 attacks on schools (72) and hospitals (23), including attacks on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, which were attributed to the Taliban (77), unidentified perpetrators (14) and ISIL-KP (4).

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<sup>4</sup> *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.

Most attacks involved violence against protected persons, including killing (79), and damage to facilities (41).

20. The military use of 54 schools and 3 hospitals by the Taliban was verified.

21. The abduction of 8 children (7 boys, 1 girl) by the Taliban (3) and unidentified perpetrators (5) was verified. Most children were abducted for the purposes of sexual violence (5).

22. A total of 718 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by the Taliban (706), unidentified perpetrators (11) and ISIL-KP (1) were verified.

#### *Developments and concerns*

23. I note the adoption by the Taliban of a code of practice preventing the recruitment and use of boys without signs of puberty, and the demobilization of approximately 141 children. However, I reiterate my call upon the Taliban to define a child as every human being below the age of 18 years, and to respect the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

24. I condemn all grave violations committed by all parties to the conflict. I am concerned by the number of children killed and maimed, including by explosive ordnance, and by attacks on and the military use of schools and hospitals. I call upon the international community to support explosive ordnance clearance and risk education. I appeal to all parties to the conflict to end and prevent grave violations against children and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

25. I am concerned by the increasing restrictions on humanitarian access and call upon the Taliban, and all parties, to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to children. I urge the Taliban to revoke their decision to ban women from working for international and national non-governmental organizations and the United Nations.

#### **Central African Republic**

26. The United Nations verified 437 violations against 321 children (179 boys, 142 girls), including 47 children who were victims of multiple violations. The United Nations verified in 2022 336 grave violations against 317 children that had occurred in previous years (201 boys, 116 girls).

27. A total of 134 children (111 boys, 23 girls), between the ages of 7 and 17, were recruited and used, by armed groups (88): Coalition des patriotes pour le changement (CPC) (57) (Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC) (45), Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) (6), anti-balaka (2), Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC) (2), Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) (1), an unidentified CPC group (1)); the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)-Achaye (23); and LRA/Zaïko Langa-Langa (8). Forty boys served in combat roles. A total of 46 children were used by other security personnel (27), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/internal security forces (8), the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (7) and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (4) as cooks, porters, for fetching water and at checkpoints. The United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 307 children that had occurred in previous years (199 boys, 108 girls) by CPC (268) (FPRC (188), anti-balaka (42), FPRC/MPC/UPC (15), FPRC/MPC (15), UPC (6), 3R (2)); and FPRC (36), anti-balaka (1), UPC (1) and LRA-Achaye (1).

28. A total of 11 boys detained for alleged association with armed groups in previous years were released, including 7 following the granting of presidential clemency in December 2022.

29. The killing (21) and maiming (59) of 80 children (47 boys, 33 girls) caused by gunshots (42), explosive remnants of war (28), physical assault (5), arson (2), stabbing (2) and crossfire (1) were verified. Violations were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (36) (including 1 in crossfire between FPRC and MPC); CPC (32) (3R (21), anti-balaka/FPRC/MPC (4), UPC (2), anti-balaka (2), anti-balaka/3R (2), an unidentified CPC group (1)); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (6); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (5) and internal security forces (1). The United Nations verified in 2022 the killing of two boys by 3R in 2021.

30. The United Nations verified 76 cases of rape perpetrated against 75 girls by CPC (33) (UPC (10), anti-balaka (9); 3R (7) FPRC (6), an unidentified CPC group (1)); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (16); LRA-Achaye (15); other security personnel (3); internal security forces (3); LRA/Zaïko Langa-Langa (2); unidentified former Séléka (2); special mixed security units (1); and unidentified perpetrators (1). In all, 1 girl was gang-raped twice, and 19 girls were raped during association with armed groups. Two Armed Forces of the Central African Republic elements were arrested. The United Nations verified in 2022 sexual violence perpetrated against 16 girls that had occurred in previous years by CPC (12) (FPRC (5), FPRC/MPC (2), anti-balaka (2), 3R (2), UPC (1)); LRA-Achaye (1); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (1); internal security forces (1); and other security personnel (1).

31. Some 18 attacks on schools (7) and hospitals (11), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, were attributed to CPC (11) (unidentified CPC groups (4), anti-balaka (2), UPC (2) 3R (2), 3R/FPRC (1)); unidentified perpetrators (6); and other security personnel (1). Incidents involved looting/robbery (11), killing and injury of and threats against protected personnel (4) and destruction (3). The United Nations verified in 2022 two attacks on schools by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel in 2021.

32. A total of 14 schools were used by other security personnel (6); CPC (4) (unidentified CPC groups (2), MPC (1), UPC (1)); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/other security personnel (2); and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (2). All schools were vacated. One school and one hospital used since 2021 by other security personnel were vacated, while the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic has continued to use a school since 2021 in Ouaka Prefecture.

33. The United Nations verified the abduction of 79 children (40 boys, 39 girls) by CPC (44) (anti-balaka (22), 3R (9), UPC (5), anti-balaka/3R (4), MPC (2), FPRC (1), an unidentified CPC group (1)); LRA-Achaye (19); anti-balaka/Darlan faction (5); LRA/Zaïko Langa-Langa (4); unidentified perpetrators (3); other security personnel (2); and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (2). Most children were abducted for the purposes of recruitment and use and/or sexual violence (44). A total of 18 children remained in LRA-Achaye captivity, while 61 escaped or were released. The United Nations verified in 2022 the abduction of seven children that had occurred in previous years (1 boy, 6 girls) by 3R (4), FPRC/MPC (2) and LRA-Achaye (1).

34. A total of 50 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to CPC (31) (anti-balaka (10), UPC (6), unidentified CPC groups (4), FPRC (2), FPRC/MPC (2), MPC (2), anti-balaka/MPC (2), 3R (1), anti-balaka/FPRC (1), anti-balaka/FPRC/MPC (1)); unidentified perpetrators (13); UPC (1); unidentified former Séléka (1); the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic (1); other security personnel (1);

internal security forces (1); and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic/ other security personnel/internal security forces (1). Incidents involved robbery, threats, abduction and assaults on humanitarian personnel. The United Nations verified in 2022 two incidents of denial of humanitarian access by 3R and internal security forces that had occurred in previous years.

*Developments and concerns*

35. I welcome the adoption in April by the Government of a national plan to counter trafficking in children, with a focus on preventing the use of children by the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, and a circular prohibiting the presence of children around Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic military bases. I also welcome Government efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations, to develop a national prevention strategy on grave violations against children, and I call upon the Government to prioritize its finalization and adoption. However, I remain concerned by the number of grave violations attributed to the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and other security personnel, notably recruitment and use and sexual violence. I call upon the Government to establish an interministerial committee to address grave violations, appoint child protection focal points in the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic and issue command directives applicable to all forces, including other security personnel. I urge the Government to investigate grave violations and hold perpetrators accountable and to finalize and adopt a protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian protection actors.

36. I welcome the adoption by CPC in June of a command directive prohibiting grave violations against children, yet I remain concerned by the scale of violations attributed to the group. I urge CPC to implement the command directive and further urge FPRC, MPC and UPC, all of which have signed action plans with the United Nations, to implement their commitments. I call upon all parties to adopt concrete measures to cease all grave violations, unconditionally release associated children and protect schools and hospitals from attacks.

37. I welcome the dialogue between LRA-Achaye and the United Nations on the release of abducted children, and I urge LRA to immediately and unconditionally release all abductees and end and prevent other violations against children.

38. I urge all parties to end and prevent sexual violence against children. I call upon the Government, with United Nations support, to ensure that adequate programmes are accessible to all survivors, including child-friendly and safe reporting and response mechanisms.

39. I welcome the efforts of the Government, with the support of the United Nations and partners, to reintegrate 1,375 children affected by conflict and the establishment of a vocational training centre in Ouaka Prefecture for conflict-affected children. I encourage the authorities to continue to ensure the effective and gender-sensitive reintegration of all children released, and urge donors to fund reintegration and vocational training.

**Colombia**

40. The United Nations verified 290 grave violations against 209 children (122 boys, 83 girls, 4 sex unknown), including 12 Venezuelan and 4 Ecuadorian children, and 44 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 four grave violations that had occurred in previous years.

41. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 130 children (77 boys, 53 girls), between the ages of 11 and 17. Perpetrators were the Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia-Ejército del Pueblo (FARC-EP) dissident groups (87), Ejército de Liberación Nacional (ELN) (18), Clan del Golfo (also known as Autodefensas Gaitanistas de Colombia) (AGC) (15) and unidentified perpetrators (10). Fifty children were used in a combat role. Most of the children were released (100), while 18 were killed and 12 remain associated. The United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 4 children that had occurred in previous years (2 boys, 2 girls) by ELN (3) and Los Caparrapos (1). According to the Colombian Family Welfare Institute, 220 children formerly associated with armed groups entered its protection programme.

42. A total of 84 children (53 boys, 27 girls, 4 sex unknown) were killed (50) and maimed (34) by FARC-EP dissident groups (32), unidentified perpetrators (29), Colombian armed forces (CAF) (12), ELN (7) and AGC (4). Child casualties resulted from gunshots (52), explosive ordnance (22), air strikes (9) and torture (1).

43. Sexual violence perpetrated against 18 girls by FARC-EP dissident groups (8), AGC (5), ELN (4) and CAF (1) was verified.

44. A total of 25 attacks on schools (22), hospitals (3) and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals were verified and attributed to FARC-EP dissident groups (14), unidentified perpetrators (5), ELN (4) and AGC (2). Incidents involved threats and attacks against protected personnel (20), damages to schools (4) and attacks on an ambulance (1).

45. A total of 10 schools were militarily used by FARC-EP dissident groups (6), CAF (1), AGC (1), ELN (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1). All schools were vacated.

46. A total of 23 children (18 boys, 5 girls), between the ages of 12 and 17, were abducted by FARC-EP dissident groups (11), ELN (5), AGC (4) and unidentified perpetrators (3), and in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in areas at the border with Colombia (2), mostly for recruitment and use purposes. A total of 3 children were killed, 15 escaped or were released and the status of 5 is unknown.

47. A total of 10 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to AGC (5), unidentified perpetrators (3) and ELN (2).

#### *Developments and concerns*

48. I commend the Government for the progress made in preventing and responding to grave violations against children and for the suspension in August 2022 of air strikes against armed groups' camps where children may be present. I encourage the strengthening of programmes that prevent grave violations against children, in particular programmes benefiting Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children. I call upon the Government to avoid the organization of civilian-military activities involving children.

49. I welcome the continued progress made by the Special Jurisdiction for Peace in case No. 07 on the recruitment and use of children, as well as the Truth Commission's recommendations and its special focus on children in its June 2022 report. I also welcome the endorsement by the Government of the Safe Schools Declaration in November and urge its swift implementation.

50. During her visit to Bogotá in December 2022, my Special Representative highlighted the inclusion of child rights in the Government's total peace policy agenda and offered United Nations expertise in prevention initiatives.



51. I am encouraged by the resumption of negotiations between the Government and ELN, which provides opportunities for the protection of children. I urge the parties to include child protection priorities from the beginning of this dialogue and any other future negotiations.

52. I am concerned by the continued increase in grave violations, notably the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children, by armed groups, in particular FARC-EP dissident groups. I am also concerned by the increase in the number of girls and Indigenous and Afro-Colombian children who are victims of grave violations. I urge armed groups to immediately end violations, unconditionally release children and adopt concrete time-bound commitments to ending and preventing grave violations. I reiterate my call upon all parties to take all necessary measures to protect children.

53. I am concerned by the increase in sexual violence against girls, including while associated with armed groups. I urge all parties to end and prevent sexual violence. I call upon the Government to ensure that adequate and child-friendly programmes are accessible to all survivors and to swiftly bring perpetrators to justice.

#### **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

54. The United Nations verified 3,377 grave violations against 2,420 children (1,680 boys, 740 girls). In addition, 981 violations against 792 children (558 boys, 234 girls), including abductions (579), sexual violence (200), recruitment and use (152), killing and maiming (32), attacks against schools and hospitals (17) and denial of humanitarian access (1), that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022. Some 1,009 children were victims of multiple violations.

55. A total of 1,545 children (1,293 boys, 252 girls), as young as age 5, were verified as having been recruited and used. Children were used in support roles (643), in combat (585), as guards (206), spies (54) and fetish keepers (26), and in unspecified roles (31).

56. The United Nations verified the new recruitment and use of 392 children (335 boys, 57 girls), all of whom were recruited and separated in 2022, by Nyatura (84), Mai-Mai Mazembe (59), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) (35), the Mouvement du 23 mars (M23) (31), Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda-Forces combattantes abacunguzi (FDLR-FOCA) (29), Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS) (26), Alliance des forces de résistance congolaise (AFRC) (18), Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke (14), Union des patriotes pour la défense du Congo (UPDC) (14), Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) (11) and other armed groups (71).

57. In addition, 1,153 children (958 boys, 195 girls), recruited in previous years, were used until their separation in 2022 by Nyatura (305), Mai-Mai Mazembe (277), Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke (125), FDLR-FOCA (114), APCLS (91), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (83), ADF (71), and other armed groups (87), including Twigwaneho (39).

58. The United Nations verified the detention of 117 children (97 boys, 20 girls), between the ages of 9 and 17, for alleged association with armed groups by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (109), the Congolese National Police (7) and the National Intelligence Agency (1). All the children were released in 2022.

59. The killing (409) and maiming (290) of 699 children (445 boys, 254 girls), between the ages of 3 months and 17 years, were perpetrated by CODECO (256), M23 (97), ADF (63), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (53), Mai-Mai Zaïre (51), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (31), unidentified perpetrators (27), Nyatura (26), the Congolese National Police (7), the National Intelligence Agency (1)

and other armed groups (87). Casualties resulted mainly from targeted attacks (584), crossfire (34), explosive ordnance (32), torture (22) and attacks on schools (17).

60. Sexual violence was perpetrated against 284 children (1 boy, 283 girls), between the ages of 4 and 17, by Nyatura (67), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (56), CODECO (41), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (23), M23 (22), ADF (17), the Congolese National Police (9), the National Intelligence Agency (1) and other armed groups (48). Verified cases involved rape (189), forced marriage (40), gang rape (36), sexual slavery (15) and attempted rape (4). The suspects arrested were 12 members of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 4 members of the Congolese National Police.

61. A total of 108 attacks on schools (70) and hospitals (38) by the following were verified: M23 (39), CODECO (21), ADF (10), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (7), Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke (7), Mai-Mai Mazembe (6), Twigwaneho (4), Mai-Mai Malaika (3), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (3), Mai-Mai Zaïre (2), Mai-Mai Yakutumba (1), Nyatura (1), Raia Mutomboki (1), Mai-Mai Kijangala (1), the Forces républicains fédéralistes Gumino (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1). In addition, 13 schools were used for military purposes by Mai-Mai Mazembe (6), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (4), M23 (1), ADF (1) and Nyatura (1).

62. A total of 730 children (469 boys, 261 girls), between the ages of 1 and 17, were abducted. Abductions were attributed to ADF (202), Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale (121), Nyatura (95), Raia Mutomboki (61), CODECO (59), M23 (58), Mai-Mai Mazembe (50), APCLS (16), FDLR-FOCA (13), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (9) and other armed groups (46). Children were abducted for recruitment and use (260) and used as porters (155) and for the purposes of extortion (104), sexual violence (47), torture (3) and unknown purposes (161).

63. A total of 11 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by CODECO (2), unidentified Mai-Mai groups (2), the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (1), ADF (1), Mai-Mai Biloze Bishambuke (1), Raia Mutomboki (1), Twigwaneho (1), Mai-Mai Toronto (1) and Mai-Mai Mutetezi (1) were verified. Incidents included threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, abduction, access restrictions and extortion.

#### *Developments and concerns*

64. I welcome the commitment of the Government to implementing the 2012 action plan and urge the Government to prioritize the implementation of its action plan related to sexual violence against children.

65. I commend the cooperation between the Government and the United Nations on screening, age verification and separation of children from the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo recruitment process. It is necessary to implement age verification at an early stage across the country and to ensure that directives on age verification and legal enrolment conditions are followed.

66. I welcome the adoption of a national strategy for a disarmament, demobilization and community recovery and stabilization programme and reiterate the need to prioritize children, especially through the provincial operational plans. I call upon donors to support reintegration programmes for children separated from armed groups.

67. I welcome the Government's ongoing efforts to hold perpetrators of grave violations accountable, and I urge them to continue to do so, including for crimes of sexual violence.

68. I welcome the signature of the unilateral commitments to protect children by Mai-Mai Machine and the release of 272 children by armed groups following United Nations advocacy.

69. I remain deeply troubled by the devastatingly high number of grave violations against children, in particular by armed groups, and the increase in killing and maiming, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals. I am deeply concerned about the deterioration of the security situation, in particular in North Kivu and Ituri, including owing to the resurgence of M23, and the resulting access restrictions on the United Nations to monitor violations.

### **Iraq**

70. The United Nations verified 202 grave violations against 173 children (125 boys, 48 girls), including 8 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 17 grave violations affecting 15 children that had occurred in previous years (6 boys, 9 girls) were verified in 2022.

71. A total of 32 children (18 boys, 14 girls), as young as age 11, were recruited and used by the People's Defence Forces of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (HPG/PKK) (28) and Da'esh (4). In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of one boy by HPG/PKK that had occurred in previous years. Children were used in combat and at checkpoints.

72. As at December 2022, 936 children (927 boys, 9 girls) remained in detention on national security-related charges, including for their actual or alleged association with armed groups, primarily Da'esh.

73. A total of 126 children (101 boys, 25 girls) were killed (55) and maimed (71) by unidentified perpetrators (100), Turkish military air strikes against Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) targets (15), Da'esh (6), HPG/PKK (3) and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps of the Islamic Republic of Iran (2). Most incidents occurred in areas previously under the control of Da'esh. Child casualties resulted from explosive remnants of war (85), ground engagement (17), air strikes (17) and crossfire (7). In addition, the killing (1) and maiming (6) of 7 children by the international counter-Da'esh coalition (4) and unidentified perpetrators (3) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

74. Sexual violence perpetrated against five girls by Da'esh was verified. The violations began in 2014, when the girls were abducted, and continued until 2022, when the girls were rescued. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 sexual violence perpetrated against three girls by Da'esh that had occurred in previous years.

75. Two attacks on schools were verified and attributed to the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1). In total, 7 instances of the military use of schools were verified by Iraqi security forces (4), the Iraqi Federal Police (1), the Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) (1) and HPG/PKK (1). Some 35 schools remained militarily used by the Iraqi Federal Police (23), Iraqi security forces (7), PMF (4) and Peshmerga (1).

76. The abduction of 18 children (9 boys, 9 girls) by Da'esh (10), HPG/PKK (4) and unidentified perpetrators (4) was verified. A total of six children were abducted for recruitment and use and/or sexual violence purposes. A total of 11 children were released, and 7 children remain in captivity. The United Nations verified in 2022 the abduction of six girls by Da'esh that had occurred in previous years.

77. A total of 19 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to Iraqi security forces (13), PMF (5) and the Iraqi police (1).

*Developments and concerns*

78. I welcome the signature of an action plan by the Government with the United Nations on 30 March 2023 to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by PMF and the absence of verified cases of recruitment and use of children by PMF. I urge the Government to fully implement the action plan.

79. I welcome the decrease in verified humanitarian access restrictions, in particular by Iraq security forces, and call upon all parties to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to children.

80. I am gravely concerned by the recruitment and use of children by HPG/PKK. I urge HPG/PKK to end the recruitment and use of children and to release all children from its ranks.

81. I am concerned that explosive ordnance is the leading cause of child casualties. I urge the Government to fully implement international conventions on landmines and explosive remnants of war to which it is a party. I call upon the Government to continue the clearance of areas contaminated by explosive hazards, explosive ordnance risk education, including prior to any movement by internally displaced persons to contaminated areas, and to prioritize victim assistance.

82. I note the release of 230 children detained on national security-related charges, but I remain concerned by the continued detention of children, including on national security-related charges, including for their actual or alleged association with Da'esh. I reiterate that the children should be treated primarily as victims and in line with international juvenile justice standards. Children should only be detained as a last resort and for the shortest period of time. I call upon the Government to release the children to child protection actors.

83. I commend the Government for the repatriation of 1,448 Iraqi children from the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic. I reiterate my call upon all countries concerned to facilitate the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of children, in line with the principle of non-refoulement, with respect for family unity and the best interests of the child, and in accordance with international law.

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

**Israel and the State of Palestine<sup>5</sup>**

85. The United Nations verified 3,133 grave violations<sup>6</sup> against 1,139 Palestinian children (1,057 boys, 82 girls) and 8 Israeli children (5 boys, 3 girls) in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel.

86. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 4 Palestinian children (3 boys, 1 girl) by Israeli forces as human shields (3) and by the Nasser Salah al-Din Brigades (1) as combatants in the occupied West Bank (3) and the Gaza Strip (1). Two children reported that the Israeli forces had attempted to recruit them as informants.

87. The United Nations verified the detention of 852 Palestinian children for alleged security offences by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (527), including 17 held under administrative detention. The United Nations received the testimonies of 82 children who reported ill-treatment by Israeli forces while in detention.

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<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of the present report, the present section provides information on grave violations in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and Israel.

<sup>6</sup> Of which 563 were caused by tear gas inhalation. See para. 89.

88. A total of 55 children (54 Palestinians, including 1 Palestinian child with Israeli citizenship, and 1 Israeli; 48 boys, 7 girls) were killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (37), in Gaza (17) and in Israel (1), by Israeli forces (42), Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (9), other Palestinian perpetrators (2), Israeli settlers (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1) in the context of simultaneous fire from Israeli forces and Israeli settlers. Most children killed in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were killed by live ammunition by Israeli forces (34), simultaneous fire by Israeli forces and Israeli settlers (1), and by Israeli settlers (1), during Israeli forces' law enforcement operations and resulting in clashes (20), in relation to attacks or attempted attacks on Israeli civilians or forces (2), confrontations involving stone-throwing or Molotov cocktails (12) and during demonstrations (2). In Gaza, 17 children were killed during the August 2022 escalation of hostilities, mostly by rockets fired by Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (9) and by Israeli forces' strikes (8). In addition, one Israeli boy was killed in an improvised explosive device attack in Jerusalem by a Palestinian perpetrator.

89. A total of 524 children (517 Palestinians, 7 Israelis; 462 boys, 62 girls) were maimed and 563 (548 boys, 15 girls) required medical assistance after inhaling tear gas fired by Israeli forces. Violations occurred in Gaza (162), in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (923), and in Israel (2), by Israeli forces (370 maimed, 563 tear gas injuries), Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (100), Israeli settlers (33), Palestinian perpetrators (5) and unidentified perpetrators (16), including by explosive remnants of war (14). Most children were maimed by Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, in the context of Israeli forces' law enforcement operations (473). The main causes of maiming by Israeli forces were live ammunition (153), rubber-coated metal bullets (136) and strikes in Gaza (44). A total of 100 Palestinian children were maimed by Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (100), in Gaza, by rockets fired during the August escalation. The 7 Israeli children were maimed by Palestinian perpetrators during stone-throwing incidents in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (3), by improvised explosive device attacks by Palestinian perpetrators (2) and by stray bullets in the occupied West Bank (2).

90. The United Nations verified 123 attacks on schools (9) and hospitals (114), including on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals (88), attributed to Israeli forces (110), Israeli settlers (11), Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1), in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (118), and in Gaza (5). Incidents involved attacks on medical personnel (83) and ambulances (28), threats against school personnel (4), air strikes (3), attacks on education and health facilities (3), a rocket attack (1) and an explosion (1). Separately, 173 other interferences with education (170) and health (3) by Israeli forces (164), Israeli settlers (4), Palestinian armed groups (1) and unidentified perpetrators (4) were verified. Most involved Israeli forces firing weapons at or in the vicinity of schools (74) and intimidation, closures and denial of teachers' and students' access through checkpoints (44). In addition, the presence of a tunnel beneath a school in Gaza for potential use by Palestinian armed groups was verified.

91. The United Nations verified the abduction of one Palestinian boy by Israeli settlers in the occupied West Bank, during which the child was subjected to severe violence. The child was released after two hours.

92. The denial of humanitarian access by Israeli forces (1,863) was verified in Gaza (1,861) and in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem (2). A total of 1,861 permit applications (1,070 for boys, 791 for girls) to Israeli authorities for children to exit through the Erez crossing to gain access to specialized medical treatment outside Gaza were denied or not approved in time to reach the children's scheduled hospital appointments, while 4,106 applications were approved. Five children died while

waiting for approval, or after repeated delays. In two incidents in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, Israeli forces imposed movement restrictions and closures of between 5 and 22 days, impeding humanitarian access to the populations of Shu'fat refugee camp and Nablus.

*Developments and concerns*

93. I welcome the collaboration and constructive engagement extended by Israeli and Palestinian parties to my Special Representative, including during her visit to Israel and the State of Palestine in December 2022, as was requested in my previous report (A/76/871-S/2022/493, paras. 302 and 303).

94. I welcome the exchange of letters with Israel, the appointment of a focal point and the identification of practical measures, including those proposed by the United Nations to end and prevent grave violations against children, including those related to the killing and maiming of children, accountability, denial of humanitarian access and attacks on and interference with health care and education.

95. I welcome the letters received from Palestinian Islamic Jihad and from Hamas, the appointment of focal points and the identification of practical measures, including those proposed by the United Nations to end and prevent grave violations against children, including those related to the killing and maiming and the recruitment and use of children.

96. I reiterate my call upon all parties to end and prevent any more violations against children and to adopt road maps to implement clear and time-bound commitments. I reiterate my call upon all parties to deepen their engagement with my Special Representative and the United Nations, especially the United Nations working group on the ground, on a regular basis. I request that my Special Representative coordinate with the United Nations the strengthening and broadening of that working group to cover Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory.

97. I am extremely alarmed by the continuing high level of grave violations against children, in particular the increasing level of violence in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, and I urge all parties to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

98. I note a meaningful decrease in the number of children killed by Israeli forces, including by air strikes, as compared with my previous report. Nevertheless, I remain deeply concerned by the number of children killed and maimed by Israeli forces during hostilities and through the use of live ammunition during law enforcement operations, and by the persistent lack of accountability for these violations. I express deep concern regarding the excessive use of force and reiterate that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life and put in place preventive and protective measures to end and prevent any excessive use of force against children. I note the existing procedures, and I urge Israel to immediately implement the practical measures discussed with my Special Representative to prevent any excessive use of force, including during law enforcement operations. I also call upon Israel to abide by its obligations under international humanitarian law and to ensure that civilians, including children, are not targeted during hostilities and that all necessary precautions are taken to protect them. I further urge Israel to pursue accountability for violations against children and to continue to investigate each case where live ammunition was used. I exhort Israel to better protect schools and hospitals, including medical personnel and ambulances. I further call upon Israel to ensure Palestinian children's access to essential health care, including by promptly granting travel permits, and I welcome the willingness of Israel to continue to engage with the United Nations on concrete measure to facilitate the issuance of permits.

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

100. I am deeply concerned by the increase in the killing and maiming of children by Palestinian Islamic Jihad's Al-Quds Brigades. I call upon all Palestinian armed groups to cease indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars from densely populated areas in Gaza towards Israeli civilian population centres. I urge all Palestinian armed groups to protect children, including by preventing them from being exposed to the risk of violence and by abstaining from instrumentalizing them for political purposes. I reiterate my call upon armed groups to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and to abide by their domestic and international legal obligations. I exhort Palestinian armed groups to better protect schools.

### **Lebanon**

101. The United Nations verified 67 grave violations against 66 children (63 boys, 3 girls).

102. The recruitment and use of 48 children (47 boys, 1 girl), between the ages of 11 and 17, by unidentified armed groups (45), Fath al-Islam (1), Jund Ansar Allah (1) and Hizbullah (1), was verified.

103. Children (2) were arrested and prosecuted under military jurisdiction on national security-related charges.

104. A total of 18 children (16 boys, 2 girls) were killed (6) and maimed (12) by unidentified perpetrators as a result of armed clashes (13) and explosive remnants of war (5).

105. One school was attacked by unidentified perpetrators in a Palestine refugee camp.

### *Developments and concerns*

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

107. I welcome the increased application of the Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics by the Palestinian National Security Forces.

108. I am concerned about increased recruitment and use of children by armed groups, and urge them to immediately cease this practice.

109. I remain concerned about the detention of children on national security grounds. I reiterate my call upon the Government to release these children to civilian child protection actors and to treat them primarily as victims, employing detention only as a last resort and for the shortest period of time.

110. I am disturbed by continued armed clashes in Palestine refugee camps and their negative impact on children's access to education, including school closures in October and November 2022, and to health services.

### **Libya**

111. The United Nations verified 102 grave violations against 63 children (44 boys, 10 girls, 9 sex unknown), including 29 children who were victims of multiple

violations. In addition, three grave violations affecting one boy that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

112. A total of 24 boys were used as cleaners by Tariq bin Ziyad Brigade affiliated with the Libyan National Army (LNA) in Sabha.

113. The United Nations received reports of the detention of some 64 children, with their mothers, of several nationalities, for their mothers' alleged association with Da'esh, by the Judicial Police, in Judaydah prison, and by LNA and affiliated forces in Kuwayfiah prison.

114. The killing (13) and maiming (12) of 25 children (15 boys, 5 girls, 5 sex unknown) by unidentified perpetrators (23), including through explosive remnants of war (11) and in crossfire (10), and the Stability Support Apparatus (2), were verified. In addition, the maiming of one boy by the Internal Security Agency that had occurred in previous years was verified in 2022.

115. Sexual violence perpetrated against 5 girls was verified and attributed to the Masked Men armed group (2) and armed groups affiliated with the Ministry of Interior (3).

116. A total of 9 attacks on schools (4) and hospitals (5) were verified and attributed to unknown perpetrators. One attack on a school by the Internal Security Agency that had occurred in previous years was verified in 2022.

117. The abduction of 38 children (29 boys, 5 girls, 4 sex unknown) by the Tariq bin Ziyad Brigade affiliated with LNA (26), armed groups affiliated with the Ministry of Interior (7), a Bani Walid criminal group led by Aseel Al-Senussi Ashnishah (2), the Masked Men (2) and the Ramzi al-Lafia Brigade (1) was verified. Most children were abducted for recruitment and use and/or sexual violence purposes (29). The United Nations verified in 2022 the abduction of one boy by the Internal Security Agency that had occurred in previous years.

118. One denial of humanitarian access was verified and attributed to unidentified perpetrators in western Tripoli.

#### *Developments and concerns*

119. I welcome the efforts of the Libyan authorities to engage with the United Nations regarding the repatriation of children detained for alleged association with Da'esh. I encourage the Libyan authorities to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of women and children allegedly associated with Da'esh and call upon all countries concerned to facilitate their voluntary repatriation and reintegration, in line with the principle of non-refoulement and with respect for the best interests of the child and in accordance with international law.

120. I am concerned about the increase in abductions of children and about the prevalence of killing and maiming of children, in particular by explosive remnants of war and crossfire between parties. I urge all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. I further call upon Libya to become a party to international conventions on explosive ordnance.

121. I urge the Libyan authorities to engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations to develop and adopt measures to end and prevent all violations against children, and to ensure that child protection provisions are included in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts.

122. I am appalled by reports of violations against refugee and migrant children, including torture and sexual violence. I urge the Libyan authorities to immediately end child detention, pursue alternatives to detention and facilitate access by the United



Nations and other humanitarian agencies to detention centres and disembarkation points.

## **Mali**

123. The United Nations verified 1,024 grave violations against 757 children (606 boys, 137 girls, 14 sex unknown), including 88 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 271 grave violations against 249 children (189 boys, 60 girls) that had occurred in previous years.

124. A total of 452 children (416 boys, 36 girls), between the ages of 10 and 17, were recruited and used by unidentified perpetrators (91); Platform (90) (Groupe d'autodéfense des Touaregs Imghad et leurs alliés (GATIA) (35), Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad des Daoussak (MSA-D) (31), Ganda Lassal Izo (20), Front de libération des régions du nord (FLN) (2), Ganda Izo (2)); Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (74) (Front de libération du Macina (FLM) (40), unidentified JNIM (34)); Mouvement pour le salut de l'Azawad (MSA) (72); Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad (CMA) (16) (unidentified CMA (7), Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA) (4), Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA) (3), MAA-CMA (Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA)-CMA) (2)); Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) (20); and Dozo traditional hunters (5). A total of 84 children were used by the Malian armed forces in support roles, of which 79 were released. The United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 237 children that had occurred in previous years (181 boys, 56 girls) by CMA (134) (HCUA (73), MNLA (38), MAA (15), unidentified CMA (8)); unidentified perpetrators (40); Platform (30) (MAA (13), GATIA (12), Ganda Lassal Izo (3), Ganda Izo (1), FNL (1)); Dozo traditional hunters (14); MSA (8); the Malian armed forces (5); JNIM (3) and ISGS (3).

125. A total of 30 boys were captured during military operations or arrested by the Malian Defence and Security Forces and international forces for alleged association with armed groups. Of the total, 25 boys were handed over to child protection structures in accordance with the Protocol on the Release and Handover of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups, signed in 2013 by the Government of Mali and the United Nations. Five children were detained by national authorities for longer periods, in contravention of the Protocol.

126. The United Nations verified the killing (106) and maiming (139) of 245 children (172 boys, 59 girls, 14 sex unknown) by unidentified perpetrators (157), including 17 during crossfire between parties, JNIM (43) (FLM (28), Katiba Serma (10), unidentified JNIM (5)); ISGS (19); the Malian armed forces (17), including jointly with foreign security personnel (3); Dan Nan Ambassagou (DNA) (4); MSA-D (3); MAA-CMA (1); and MSA (1). Most casualties resulted from gunshot during attacks on villages, and explosive ordnance (98). The United Nations verified in 2022 the killing (1) and maiming (6) of 7 children (5 boys, 2 girls) by MNLA (5) and JNIM (2) in 2021.

127. The rape of 36 girls by unidentified perpetrators (28), MSA-D (4), DNA (2), Ganda Koy (1) and the Malian armed forces (1) was verified. The United Nations verified in 2022 sexual violence perpetrated against seven girls by unidentified perpetrators (6) and the Malian armed forces (1).

128. A total of 97 attacks on schools (83) and hospitals (14), including on protected persons in relation to schools/hospitals, were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (87), including during clashes between the Malian armed forces and FLM (2), JNIM (8), (FLM (5), Katiba Serma (3)); DNA (1); and the Malian armed forces (1). Incidents involved destruction, looting, attacks and threats against protected persons, including their killing and abduction, and the explosion of an ambulance.

129. A total of 3 schools were militarily used by FLM (2) and the Malian armed forces (1). The Malian armed forces used the school for a few hours.

130. A total of 109 children (90 boys, 19 girls) were abducted by unidentified perpetrators (56), JNIM (40) (FLM (20), unidentified JNIM (11), Katiba Serma (9)); ISGS (9); DNA (2); MSA (1); and Ganda Koy (1). Children were abducted mostly for recruitment and use and/or sexual violence purposes (54) and as punishment for not respecting rules imposed by armed groups (33). A total of 96 children escaped or were released. The United Nations verified in 2022 the abduction of 20 children (15 boys, 5 girls) by unidentified perpetrators that had occurred in previous years.

131. A total of 85 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (71), the Malian armed forces (9), JNIM (3) (FLM (1), Katiba Serma (1), unidentified JNIM (1)); and ISGS (2). Incidents involved robberies and killing, abduction, detention and intimidation of humanitarian personnel.

#### *Developments and concerns*

132. I welcome the transitional Government's efforts, in cooperation with the United Nations, to develop a national prevention plan regarding all grave violations against children, and I call for its adoption and implementation.

133. I am concerned by the elevated number of cases of recruitment and use of children by the Malian armed forces. I urge the transitional Government to notify the United Nations of children associated with the government forces and to release them. I call upon the transitional Government to finalize the revision of the Child Protection Code, criminalizing the recruitment and use of children, including those between the ages of 15 and 17, to finalize and adopt the bill on the protection of education from attacks, and to investigate violations and hold perpetrators accountable. I welcome the cooperation with the United Nations on the 2013 handover protocol, but I further call for its full implementation and upon the transitional Government to release all children in its custody.

134. I welcome the adoption by the transitional Government in November 2022 of a decree on compensation for human rights violations. I welcome the fact that, with United Nations support, 529 children formerly associated with armed groups received reintegration services.

135. I welcome the adoption by CMA and Platform of road maps to accelerate the full implementation of their action plans and I call upon both parties to collaborate with the United Nations. I remain concerned by the continued recruitment and use of children by CMA and Platform. I call upon both to release all children from their ranks to prevent further recruitment and use and other grave violations.

136. I remain alarmed at the elevated number of grave violations against children. I urge all parties to immediately cease all violations, unconditionally release associated children, protect schools and hospitals and allow the safe and unimpeded access of humanitarian actors.

#### **Myanmar**

137. The United Nations verified 1,226 grave violations against 939 children (601 boys, 225 girls, 113 sex unknown). In addition, 39 violations against 39 children that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

138. The recruitment and use of 235 children (215 boys, 20 girls), as young as age 12, attributed to the Myanmar armed forces (112), the border guard forces (35), the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) (49), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (18), the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) (7), the

Shan State Progressive Party (SSPP)/Shan State Army (SSA) (7), the Chin National Front (2), the Karen National Liberation Army (2), the Democratic Karen Benevolent Army (DKBA) (2) and the Ta'ang National Liberation Army (TNLA) (1), mostly in Rakhine, Kachin and Kayin states and regions, was verified. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 33 children that had occurred in previous years (32 boys, 1 girl) by the Myanmar armed forces (26), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (6) and KIA (1).

139. The detention of 129 children (115 boys, 14 girl) by the Myanmar armed forces for their alleged association with armed groups was verified.

140. The killing (149) and maiming (372) of 521 children (342 boys, 175 girls, 4 sex unknown), some as young as a few months old, by the Myanmar armed forces and other security forces (377), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (9), Pyu Saw Htee (1), TNLA (1) and unidentified perpetrators (133), including those resulting from explosive ordnance (87) and crossfire (33), were verified, mostly in Sagaing, Shan, Kayin, Kayah, Rakhine, Chin, Mon, Yangon, Magway and Kachin states and regions. In addition, the maiming of 5 children (4 boys, 1 girl) by the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (2), unidentified perpetrators (2) and the Myanmar armed forces (1) in 2021 was verified in 2022.

141. The rape of 2 girls by TNLA (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1) was verified. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the rape of one girl by a Myanmar armed forces-aligned militia that had occurred in previous years.

142. The United Nations verified 105 attacks on schools (78) and hospitals (27), attributed to the Myanmar armed forces (66), unidentified perpetrators (26), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (12) and the Karenni National People's Liberation Front (1), mostly in Sagaing, Kayin and Kayah states and regions.

143. The military use of 115 schools and 7 hospitals by the Myanmar armed forces, including with aligned militias (118), the Arakan Army (3) and the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (1) was verified.

144. The abduction of 286 children (134 boys, 43 girls, 109 sex unknown), some as young as a few months old, by the Myanmar armed forces (206), KIA (40), TNLA (24), MNDA (7), Pyu Saw Htee (3), SSPP/SSA (2), DKBA (2), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1) was verified.

145. A total of 77 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by the Myanmar armed forces (61), unidentified perpetrators (7), the Myanmar armed forces and the Myanmar Police Force (4), the People's Defence Forces/local defence groups (3), the Arakan Army (1) and Pa-O National Army (1) were verified, mostly in Shan, Chin, Sagaing and Kayah states and regions. Humanitarian access has worsened owing to administrative and physical impediments to the movement of aid, increased arrests and violence against humanitarian workers, and high insecurity.

#### *Developments and concerns*

146. I strongly condemn the violations against children, and I am concerned by the spread of clashes to new areas and the multiplication of armed actors. I am alarmed by the scale of abductions and the killing and maiming of children, in particular by the Myanmar armed forces. I urge the Myanmar armed forces and other parties to comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, to take measures to protect children during operations, to cease and prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and on protected persons, and to prevent the military use of schools and hospitals. I call upon all parties to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent grave violations against children.

147. I am extremely concerned by the high number of children recruited and used by the Myanmar armed forces, notably in Rakhine State. I call for the full implementation of the joint action plan on the recruitment and use of children, in close cooperation with the United Nations. I am gravely concerned by the pattern of indiscriminate and targeted attacks by the Myanmar armed forces on civilians, including children, internally displaced persons and humanitarian workers. I reiterate my call upon the Myanmar armed forces to sign a joint action plan with the United Nations to end the killing and maiming of children and prevent sexual violence.

148. I welcome the ongoing coordination with KIA towards the reintegration of children and call upon other armed groups to strengthen their engagement with the United Nations to end and prevent grave violations.

149. I am alarmed by increased restrictions on humanitarian access and call upon the Myanmar armed forces and other parties to allow and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access.

150. I am concerned by the high number of children in detention and by cases of torture, and urge the Myanmar armed forces to immediately release detained children and comply with international juvenile justice standards. I call for the respect and implementation of the July 2019 Child Rights Law.

### **Somalia**

151. The United Nations verified 2,783 grave violations against 2,282 children (1,810 boys, 472 girls), including 431 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, five violations that had occurred in 2021 were verified in 2022.

152. A total of 1,094 children (1,022 boys, 72 girls), as young as age 8, were verified as having been recruited and used by Al-Shabaab (902); regional forces (68) (Puntland forces (23), Puntland police (21), “Somaliland” forces (8), Galmudug police (6), Jubbaland forces (5), Galmudug forces (3), Jubbaland police (1), Hirshabelle police (1)); clan militias (65); government security forces (37) (Somali National Army (22), the Somali Police Force (14), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (1)); “community defence forces” (15); and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama‘a (ASWJ) (7). Children were used in combat (101), in support roles (146) and for unknown purposes (847).

153. A total of 176 boys, of which 104 were released and 1 was killed, were detained for their alleged association with armed groups by the Somali Police Force (93), the Somali National Army (41), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (7), regional forces (34) (Southwest Police (8), Jubbaland forces (5), Galmudug police (5), Hirshabelle police (5), Puntland forces (4), Jubbaland police (6), Galmudug forces (1)); and the Ethiopian Liyu Police (1).

154. The killing (166) and maiming (546) of 712 children (550 boys, 162 girls) by unidentified perpetrators (254); Al-Shabaab (223); government security forces (90) (Somali National Army (58), the Somali Police Force (28), the National Intelligence and Security Agency (4)); clan militias (73); regional forces (59) (Puntland police (28), Puntland forces (18), Jubbaland forces (8), Jubbaland police (2), Hirshabelle police (1), the Puntland Maritime Police Force (1), South-West forces (1)); Da’esh (5); ASWJ (4); AMISOM (3); and the Ethiopian Liyu Police (1) were verified. The main causes of casualties were small arms and light weapons (384), including during crossfire, indiscriminate shootings and targeted killings, and explosive ordnance (276).

155. Sexual violence perpetrated against 221 children (2 boys, 219 girls) by unidentified perpetrators (132); government security forces (32) (Somali National Army (23), the Somali Police Force (8), joint operations of the Somali National

Army/National Intelligence and Security Agency (1)); Al-Shabaab (30); clan militias (21); regional forces (4); (Jubbaland forces (2), Jubbaland police (1), Puntland police (1)); the Ethiopian Liyu Police (1); and “community defence forces” (1) was verified. Cases included rape (146), attempted rape (37) and forced marriage (28).

156. A total of 44 attacks on schools (39) and hospitals (5), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, were verified. Incidents were attributed to Al-Shabaab (40), clan militias (2) and unidentified perpetrators (2). Most incidents involved the abduction, killing or injury of protected persons (30). The United Nations also verified one military use of a school by Al-Shabaab.

157. A total of 694 children (639 boys, 55 girls) were abducted by Al-Shabaab (663); clan militias (6); government security forces (3) (Somali Police Force (2), the Somali National Army (1)); and unidentified armed elements (22). Most children were abducted for recruitment and use (334), owing to alleged association with opposing parties to conflict (76), and indoctrination and alleged recruitment (69). Some escaped or were released (144).

158. A total of 18 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by clan militias (5), the Somali National Army (4), Al-Shabaab (4), jointly by “Somaliland” security forces/unidentified armed elements (2), unidentified perpetrators (2) and the Southwest Police (1) were verified.

#### *Developments and concerns*

159. I welcome the Federal Government’s continued efforts to implement the 2019 road map to expedite the 2012 action plans on ending and preventing the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children, including at the federal member state level. I commend the establishment of an interministerial committee on children and armed conflict. I note with concern the increase in violations by security and police forces at the federal member state level and urge the Government to prioritize the implementation of its commitments to ending conflict-related sexual violence and other grave violations. I call upon the Government to ensure that the “community defence forces” end and prevent grave violations.

160. I note the Federal Government’s continued implementation of the 2014 standard operating procedures for the handover of children allegedly associated with armed groups, including the establishment of a child protection screening unit in the Ministry of Internal Security to support the handover of children. I welcome the transfer of 341 children to the United Nations Children’s Fund for reintegration support. I am concerned by the continuing high number of children detained for alleged association with armed groups, the prosecution of minors through military courts and the death penalty being imposed on children in Puntland. I urge the Federal Government and federal member states to treat children primarily as victims and to detain them only as a last resort and for the shortest period of time.

161. I reiterate my call upon the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, and urge the Government to expedite the endorsement of the child rights bill, the juvenile justice bill and age verification guidelines, and to adopt the sexual offences bill of 2018.

162. I am appalled by the ongoing high number of violations attributed to Al-Shabaab, in particular the recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and abduction of children.

163. I call upon all parties to immediately cease and prevent violations and to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

### South Sudan

164. The United Nations verified 466 grave violations against 335 children (201 boys, 129 girls, 5 sex unknown), including 25 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, three violations that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

165. A total of 110 children (107 boys, 3 girls), including some 30 children under age 15, were recruited and used by the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Kit-Gwang (SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang) (27), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) (25), the South Sudan People's Defence Forces (SSPDF) (25), forces loyal to General Moses Lokujo (17), forces loyal to General James Nando (7), the South Sudan National Wildlife Services (4), the South Sudan National Police Service (2), the South Sudan Opposition Alliance (2) and the National Prison Service of South Sudan (1). Children were used in combat and as bodyguards, porters and cooks.

166. The killing (46) and maiming (34) of 80 children (61 boys, 17 girls, 2 sex unknown) were carried out by unidentified perpetrators (37), including resulting from explosive ordnance (30) and crossfire between SSPDF and SPLM/A-IO (1) and SPLM/A-IO and Sudan People's Liberation Movement-Army in Opposition Agwelek (SPLM/A-IO Agwelek) (2), SSPDF (30), SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (9), forces loyal to General Stephen Buay Rolnyang (2), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (1) and the National Salvation Front (NAS) (1).

167. Sexual violence was perpetrated against 94 girls, as young as age 7, by SSPDF (74), SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (10), SPLM/A-IO (4), the South Sudan National Police Service (2), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (2) and unidentified perpetrators (2).

168. A total of 62 attacks on schools (51) and hospitals (11) were attributed to SSPDF (30), unidentified perpetrators (20), including in crossfire between SPLM/A-IO and SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (16) and SPLM/A-IO Agwelek and SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (1), NAS (8), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (2), SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (1) and SPLM/A-IO (1). In addition, the military use of 24 schools and 2 hospitals by SSPDF (16), the Necessary Unified Forces (2), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (2), SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (2), SPLM/A-IO (1) and NAS (1) was verified.

169. The abduction of 76 children (36 boys, 37 girls, 3 sex unknown) by SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (33), SSPDF (18), NAS (10), the National People's Alliance Movement (6), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (3), SPLM/A-IO (3), unidentified perpetrators (2) and the South Sudan United Front/Army (1) was verified.

170. A total of 44 incidents of denial of humanitarian access by SSPDF (16), NAS (12), the South Sudan National Police Service (7), SPLM/A-IO (3), unidentified perpetrators (3), SPLM/A-IO Agwelek (2) and SPLM/A-IO Kit-Gwang (1) were verified.

#### *Developments and concerns*

171. I welcome the commitment of the Government to the 2020 Comprehensive Action Plan to End and Prevent All Grave Violations against Children and reiterate my call for the Government to prioritize its implementation and to budget accordingly. I underline the importance of the implementation of the Revitalized Peace Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan, including its provisions relating to children.

172. I encourage the continued access to barracks provided by the Government to the United Nations for age screening, but I remain concerned by the number of children recruited and used, in particular by government security forces.

173. I am gravely concerned about the significant increase in grave violations, especially sexual violence, abduction and attacks on schools and hospitals, notably by government security forces. I call upon all parties to immediately cease and prevent violations, to facilitate humanitarian access, including by preventing bureaucratic impediments and protecting humanitarian personnel, and to release associated children.

174. I am concerned about the escalating subnational and communal violence affecting children, which may be linked to the overall security situation.

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

176. I encourage the continued cooperation of parties to the conflict with the United Nations and the National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission. I reiterate the need for reintegration programmes for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups, services and assistance programmes for survivors of sexual violence, security sector reform and demining. I call upon the Government to invest in these efforts.

#### **Sudan**

177. The United Nations verified 306 grave violations against 253 children (164 boys, 82 girls, 7 sex unknown), including 10 girls who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 15 violations that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

178. A total of 68 children (59 boys, 9 girls), between the ages of 9 and 17, were verified as recruited and used by the Sudanese Alliance (34), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Malik Agar faction (SPLM-N Malik Agar) (17), the Third Front-Tamazuj (10), the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) (2), the Sudan Liberation Army-Minni Minawi (SLA/MM) (2), the Gathering of the Sudan Liberation Forces (1), the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) (1) and the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army-Transitional Council (SLM/A-TC) (1) in West Darfur (30) and North Darfur (38). Children were used in combat (40), support roles (23) and unknown capacities (5).

179. The killing (74) and maiming (76) of 150 children (102 boys, 41 girls, 7 sex unknown), some as young as 7, were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (146), including owing to explosive remnants of war (50), the Rapid Support Forces (1), SAF (1), the Sudan Police Force (SPF) (1) and the Sudan Liberation Army-Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW) (1).

180. Sexual violence was perpetrated against 35 girls, between the ages of 12 and 17, by unidentified perpetrators (26), the Rapid Support Forces (5) and the Chadian National Army (4).

181. A total of 33 attacks on schools (22) and hospitals (11) by unidentified perpetrators (28), the Sudan Police Force (2), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North Abdelaziz al-Hilu faction (SPLM/N-al Hilu) (1), the Rapid Support Forces (1) and SAF (1) were verified. In addition, the military use of schools (11) by unidentified perpetrators (5), the Rapid Support Forces (3), JEM (1) and SLA/AW (1) was verified.

182. The abduction of 10 children (3 boys, 7 girls), between the ages of 9 and 17, by unidentified perpetrators (9) and the Rapid Support Forces (1) was verified.

183. A total of 10 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (8), SAF (1) and SPLM/N-al Hilu (1).

*Developments and concerns*

184. While it was not during the reporting period, I am deeply alarmed at the recent outbreak of hostilities and call upon all parties to immediately cease hostilities, fully comply with international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including by protecting schools and hospitals, and facilitate humanitarian access.

185. I welcome the collaboration between the Sudanese authorities and the United Nations on the basis of the 2021 road map based on the 2016 action plan on ending and preventing child recruitment and use by national authorities and armed groups signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement. I commend the operationalization of the high-level and technical committees overseeing its implementation. I reiterate my call upon the Sudanese authorities to engage with the United Nations on a longer-term national plan to prevent all grave violations.

186. I encourage the continued cooperation of the national authorities and armed group signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement with the United Nations on the screening of forces to identify children and facilitate their release.

187. I am concerned by the impact of intercommunal violence, especially in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan, on children. I urge the Sudanese authorities and the signatories to the Juba Peace Agreement to implement the National Plan for the Protection of Civilians, including by preventing grave violations against children, and to deploy the Joint Security-Keeping Force in Darfur to protect civilians.

188. I call upon the Sudanese authorities to ensure the safety of and access to mine action operations, including explosive ordnance risk education, and call upon donors to support such operations.

189. I urge all factions of SLA/AW to engage with the United Nations to sign an action plan, and call upon JEM, SLA/MM, SPLM/N-al Hilu and SPLM-N Malik Agar to fully implement their respective action plans and other commitments, including under their respective 2020 and 2021 road maps.

190. I am concerned about the increase in killing and maiming, recruitment and use, sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals during the reporting period. I urge all parties to immediately release, unconditionally, all children to civilian child protection actors and to immediately vacate schools and hospitals.

**Syrian Arab Republic**

191. The United Nations verified 2,438 grave violations against 2,407 children (2,059 boys, 312 girls, 36 sex unknown), including 7 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 10 grave violations against 10 children (9 boys, 1 girl) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

192. A total of 1,696 children (1,593 boys, 103 girls) were verified as recruited and used by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) (637) (the Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ) (633), other components of SDF (4)) and the Internal Security Forces, under the umbrella of the self-administration in northern and eastern Syria (21) (the Internal Security Forces); the opposition Syrian National Army (SNA) (611) (Ahrar al-Sham (27), Jabhah al-Shamiyah (25), Faylaq al-Rahman (17), Faylaq al-Sham (15), Suqur al-Sham (14), Sultan Murad Division (10), Jaysh al-Sharqiyah (10), Hamzah Division (9), Jabhah al-Sharqiyah (6), Firqa al-Sahiliyah (1), unidentified factions (477)); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (383); Syrian government forces (15) and pro-government militias (10); the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (10); Nour al-Din al-Zanki (5); and Da'esh (4). Most children (1,688) were used in combat. In addition, the recruitment and use of 3 children



(2 boys, 1 girl) by YPG/YPJ (2) and the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (1) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

193. Two boys were detained by Syrian government forces (1) and YPG/YPJ (1) for alleged association with armed groups. At the end of 2022, over 600 children, including foreigners, reportedly remained detained for alleged association with armed groups, mainly Da'esh, in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic, and over 55,500 persons, mostly women and children, with suspected family ties to Da'esh continued to be held in Hawl and Rawj camps in the north-eastern Syrian Arab Republic.

194. The United Nations verified the killing (307) and maiming (404) of 711 children (466 boys, 209 girls, 36 sex unknown), attributed to Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (178) (including pro-government air forces (44) and the National Defence Forces (NDF) (1)); SDF (73) (YPG/YPJ (44), other components of SDF (29)) and the Internal Security Forces (1); opposition SNA (47); Da'esh (38); the Turkish Armed Forces (6); the international counter-Da'esh coalition (3); Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (1); and unidentified perpetrators (364). Casualties resulted mainly from explosive ordnance (375), ground shelling (217), air strikes (63) and live ammunition (52). In addition, the killing (2) and maiming (5) of 7 boys by pro-government air forces (1) and unidentified perpetrators (6) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

195. Rape and other forms of sexual violence perpetrated against three girls by Da'esh were verified.

196. The United Nations verified 17 attacks on schools (13) and hospitals (4), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to Syrian government forces and pro-government forces (5), including pro-government air forces (2); Da'esh (3); opposition SNA (2); SDF (1); the Internal Security Forces (1); Turkish armed forces (1); and unidentified perpetrators (4). Attacks resulted mainly from ground shelling (5), air strikes (5) and live ammunition (4).

197. The military use of 50 schools (48) and hospitals (2) was attributed to YPG/YPJ (42), Syrian government forces, pro-government forces and militias (6) and opposition SNA (2).

198. The abduction of 4 children (1 boy, 3 girls) by YPG/YPJ (2) and the Patriotic Revolutionary Youth Movement (2) was verified. All the children were abducted for recruitment and use.

199. A total of 7 incidents of denial of humanitarian access were verified and attributed to Da'esh (3); SDF (1); opposition SNA (1); pro-government air forces (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1). Incidents included damages to humanitarian facilities (4) and attacks on humanitarian personnel (3).

#### *Developments and concerns*

200. I welcome the ongoing dialogue between the Government and the United Nations on commitments to ending and preventing grave violations against children, including taking steps to organize a joint workshop with the United Nations to develop and adopt a comprehensive action plan. I encourage the Government to continue its engagement with the United Nations, including through the signing of a comprehensive action plan.

201. I note the implementation of the 2019 action plan by SDF, resulting in the disengagement of 33 children from their ranks and the screening out of 219 children. I further note the renewed cooperation of SDF with United Nations focal points and the Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict in the north-east towards the implementation of the action plan despite a pause, and SDF commitment to holding

a joint review of the action plan and developing a road map for its implementation. However, I am deeply concerned by the increase in verified cases of child recruitment and use by SDF, and I urge SDF to immediately end all violations and to recommit to the 2019 action plan.

202. I note the constructive engagement between factions of the opposition SNA, including SNA leadership, Ahrar al-Sham and Jaysh al-Islam, and the United Nations, including the organization of workshops on child protection to develop an action plan. I urge the opposition SNA to prioritize the adoption and implementation of an action plan.

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

204. I remain alarmed by the deprivation of liberty of children for their alleged association with parties to conflict. I call upon all parties to facilitate meaningful and systematic United Nations access to children deprived of liberty. I reiterate my call to treat children primarily as victims, and that deprivation of liberty should be a last resort and for the shortest period of time, in line with international juvenile justice standards and the best interests of the child.

205. I remain seriously concerned by the humanitarian situation and violence affecting women and children in Hawl and Rawj camps and in places of detention in the north-east. I encourage the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the local authorities in the north-east to cooperate and to actively support coordination across sectors between the United Nations and other humanitarian actors in camps to enable the delivery of timely humanitarian assistance to children deprived of liberty. I reiterate my call upon all concerned countries of origin and relevant authorities inside the Syrian Arab Republic to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of women and children who are currently in these camps, including those with suspected family ties to Da'esh, in line with international law and in respect for the principles of non-refoulement, family unity and the best interests of the child, and with the support of the United Nations, upon request, in line with the Global Framework on United Nations Support to Member States on Individuals Returned from the Syrian Arab Republic and Iraq.

### **Yemen**

206. The United Nations verified 1,596 grave violations against 637 children (522 boys, 115 girls), including 26 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 245 grave violations against 212 children that had occurred in previous years (185 boys, 27 girls) were verified in 2022.

207. A total of 105 children (103 boys, 2 girls), some as young as 10, were verified as recruited and used by the Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah) (hereinafter "the Houthis") (77), the Security Belt Forces (12), the Shabwani Elite Forces (10), the Yemen Armed Forces (4), the Amaliqah Brigades (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1). Thirty-three children were used in combat. In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the recruitment and use of 93 boys by the Houthis (63), the Yemen Armed Forces (17), the Security Belt Forces (9), the Amaliqah Brigades (3) and unidentified perpetrators (1) that had occurred in previous years. Of concern, the United Nations received reports of the organization by the Houthis of "summer camps" for children, exposing them to military content and activities.

208. The deprivation of liberty of 6 children (5 boys, 1 girl) for their alleged association with parties to conflict was verified and attributed to the Yemen Armed Forces (4) and the Houthis (2).

209. The United Nations verified the killing (158) and maiming (386) of 544 children (432 boys, 112 girls), attributed to unidentified perpetrators (357), including in crossfire (30), the Houthis (88), the Coalition to Support Legitimacy in Yemen (the Coalition) (43), the Yemen Armed Forces (26), the Security Belt Forces (21) and the Amaliqah Brigades (9). The main causes of child casualties were explosive remnants of war (282), mortar and artillery shelling (103), gunshots and crossfire (77), air strikes and drone attacks (50) and the running over of children by military vehicles (14). In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 the killing (51) and maiming (79) of 130 children (104 boys, 26 girls) by unidentified perpetrators (66), including in crossfire (6), the Houthis (27), the Coalition (21), the Yemen Armed Forces (11) and the Security Belt Forces (5) that had occurred in previous years.

210. Sexual violence against three children (2 boys, 1 girl) was verified and attributed to the Yemen Armed Forces (3). In addition, the United Nations verified in 2022 sexual violence against three boys by the Yemen Armed Forces (2) and the Houthis (1) that had occurred in previous years.

211. A total of 32 attacks on schools (7) and hospitals (25), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, were verified and attributed to the Coalition (13), the Houthis (10), the Yemen Armed Forces (3), the Security Belt Forces (2), the Amaliqah Brigades (2), unidentified perpetrators (1), and jointly to the Yemen Armed Forces and the Shabwani Elite Forces (1). In addition, 12 attacks on schools (9) and hospitals (3) by the Houthis (5), the Southern Transitional Council (2), the Yemen Armed Forces (2), the Security Belt Forces (2) and the Amaliqah Brigades (1) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

212. The military use of 73 schools (67) and hospitals (6) was verified and attributed to the Houthis (66), the Yemen Armed Forces (6) and the Shabwani Elite Forces (1).

213. The abduction of 11 children (10 boys, 1 girl) was attributed to the Houthis (10) and the Security Belt Forces (1). The abduction of most of the children for recruitment and use purposes (9) was verified. Eight children escaped or were released, and the status of three is unknown. The United Nations verified in 2022 the abduction of 7 children (6 boys, 1 girl) by the Houthis (3), the Yemen Armed Forces (2), the Security Belt Forces (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1) that had occurred in previous years.

214. A total of 901 incidents of denial of humanitarian access, attributed to the Houthis (601), unidentified perpetrators (210), the Yemen Armed Forces (68), the Coalition (11), the Security Belt Forces (6), the Amaliqah Brigades (4) and the Southern Transitional Council (1), were verified. Incidents involved attacks, in-country movement restrictions and interference with humanitarian activities in Amanat al-Asimah, Sa'dah and Hudaydah.

#### *Developments and concerns*

215. I welcome the continued commitment of the Government to implementing the 2014 action plan and the 2018 road map to end and prevent child recruitment and use. I further welcome the establishment of child protection units in all military regions, and the conduct of field visits to disseminate directives banning child recruitment and verify the absence of children from military ranks. I note the significant decrease in the number of verified cases of children recruited and used and killed and maimed by the Yemen Armed Forces, and efforts by the Government to facilitate humanitarian access. I encourage the Government to continue to strengthen existing measures to prevent child casualties during military operations and to prevent violations. I call

upon the Government to adopt a handover protocol on the release of children detained during military operations. I further welcome the commitment from the Security Belt Forces to abide by the existing action plan and the first training of its forces on the six grave violations that took place in March 2023.

216. I welcome the continued engagement of the Coalition with my Special Representative to sustainably end and prevent grave violations against children, and the progress achieved in the implementation of the programme of time-bound activities endorsed in January 2020. I note the continued and significant decrease in the number of child casualties, and I call upon the Coalition to pursue the implementation of the 2019 memorandum of understanding and the related programme of time-bound activities. I urge the Coalition to expedite justice, accountability and redress to children who are victims and their families. Continuous monitoring and engagement to ensure the sustained implementation of agreed activities and further reductions in the number of affected children, as verified by the United Nations, are expected and will be closely observed.

217. I welcome the progress made by the Houthis in the implementation of the 2022 action plan, and the significant decrease in violations in 2022. In particular, I welcome the appointment of the technical committee and of senior focal points, and the endorsement of standard operating procedures to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children. I urge the Houthis to continue to fully implement the action plan, including by releasing all children, and to end and prevent violations. I call upon the Houthis to continue to implement the 2020 handover protocol and to allow the unimpeded access of the United Nations to all places of detention.

218. I am encouraged by the decreasing number of grave violations, especially of children recruited and used and killed and maimed, in particular during the United Nations-brokered nationwide truce between the Government of Yemen and the Houthis that was in place from April to October 2022. I urge parties to renew and expand the truce and to engage with my Special Envoy for Yemen towards the resumption of an inclusive political process to reach a comprehensive negotiated settlement, and to include child protection concerns in this process.

219. I remain concerned by the prevalence of killing and maiming of children, including by landmines and explosive ordnance. I urge all parties to urgently facilitate explosive ordnance clearance and explosive ordnance risk education.

220. I remain concerned about the continued high number of humanitarian access constraints, and I urge all parties to facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access.

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

### **Burkina Faso**

221. The United Nations verified 1,202 grave violations against 863 children (546 boys, 298 girls, 19 sex unknown), including 85 children who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, 366 grave violations against 294 children (54 boys, 104 girls, 136 sex unknown) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

222. A total of 115 children (111 boys, 4 girls), between the ages of 3 to 17, were recruited and used by Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM) (65), Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) (28) and unidentified perpetrators (22), mostly in the Sahel Region. Most children (102) were used in combat. In 2022, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 10 boys by the Defence and Security Forces that had occurred in 2021.

223. Some 13 boys were detained in the high security prison of Ouagadougou for their alleged association with armed groups, including 6 who have been in detention for a number of years. Two of them were released in 2022. Seven of the detained boys have reached the age of 18 and been transferred to the prison's adult section.

224. The United Nations verified the killing (423) and maiming (202) of 625 children (423 boys, 185 girls, 17 sex unknown) by ISGS (204), JNIM (178), the Defence and Security Forces (152), unidentified perpetrators (70, including 28 in crossfire between parties), joint operations of the Defence and Security Forces and Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (VDP) (18), Dozo traditional hunters (2) and VDP (1), and occurred mostly in the Sahel Region. Child casualties resulted mainly from gunshots (321), air strikes (98), physical assault (86) and improvised explosive devices (59). In 2022, the United Nations verified the killing (1) and maiming (51) of 52 children by JNIM (51) and ISGS (1) in 2021.

225. The rape of 16 girls by JNIM (9), unidentified perpetrators (4), the Defence and Security Forces (2) and ISGS (1), mostly in Centre-Nord and Sahel Regions, was verified. In 2022, the United Nations also verified sexual violence perpetrated against four girls by JNIM in 2021.

226. Responsibility for 163 verified attacks on schools (120) and hospitals (43), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, was attributed to JNIM (109), ISGS (41), unidentified perpetrators (12) and joint operations of the Defence and Security Forces and VDP (1). Incidents involved the abduction and killing of, as well as threats against, protected persons, and the destruction, closure and looting of facilities. In 2022, the United Nations verified four attacks on schools (1) and hospitals (3) attributed to JNIM (2), ISGS (1) and unidentified perpetrators (1), which had occurred in 2021.

227. Five schools and one hospital were militarily used by the Defence and Security Forces (2), JNIM (2) and ISGS (2). One school and one hospital continued to be used as at December 2022 by JNIM and ISGS, respectively.

228. A total of 205 children (72 boys, 131 girls, 2 sex unknown) were abducted by JNIM (143), ISGS (35) and unidentified perpetrators (27), mostly as punishment for not adhering to the norms set by armed groups or as a means to gather intelligence on VDP/Defence and Security Forces positions. Most children (169) were subsequently released. Two girls died following their abduction and rape. In 2022, the United Nations verified the abduction of 295 children by JNIM in 2021.

229. Responsibility for 78 verified incidents of the denial of humanitarian access was attributed to JNIM (57), ISGS (12), unidentified perpetrators (6) and the Defence and Security Forces (3). Incidents involved the abduction, detention, killing and maiming of humanitarian personnel, the looting and destruction of infrastructure, and the cutting off of humanitarian access. In 2022, the United Nations also verified one incident of the denial of humanitarian access by unidentified perpetrators in 2021.

#### *Developments and concerns*

230. I welcome the signing on 12 September of a handover protocol for the transfer of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors between the transitional authorities and the United Nations. I call upon the transitional authorities to implement the protocol, to treat children associated with armed groups primarily as victims and to release all detained children.

231. I am alarmed by the sharp increase in the number of grave violations, in particular the killing and maiming of children, abductions, affecting girls in particular, the recruitment and use of children, in particular by JNIM and ISGS, and by the attacks on schools and hospitals. I urge JNIM, ISGS and other parties to release

associated children, cease all violations and end attacks on schools and hospitals and on protected persons.

232. I call upon all parties to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent violations and further urge the authorities, and VDP, to prevent grave violations committed during security operations and to pursue accountability, in line with international humanitarian and human rights law.

### **Cameroon**

233. The United Nations verified 156 violations against 111 children (47 boys, 58 girls, 6 sex unknown), including four girls who were victims of multiple violations. In addition, eight grave violations affecting eight children (3 boys, 5 girls) that occurred in 2021 were verified in 2022.

234. The recruitment and use of 8 children (4 boys, 4 girls), aged 14 to 15, by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) in the Far North Region was verified. In 2022, the United Nations verified incidents of the recruitment and use of 4 children (1 boy, 3 girls) by JAS (4) that had occurred in previous years.

235. A total of 34 children (30 boys, 4 sex unknown) were detained by national authorities for their alleged association with armed groups (30) and on national security grounds (4). As at December 2022, 30 children remained in detention.

236. The killing (18) and maiming (20) of 38 children (25 boys, 11 girls, 2 sex unknown) by JAS (14), Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (11), unidentified perpetrators (10), including in crossfire between the Cameroon Armed Forces (CAF) and unidentified perpetrators (2), and by the Cameroon Armed Forces (3) was verified. Casualties occurred in Far North (29), North-West (7) and South-West (2) and resulted mainly from gunshots (18), improvised explosive devices (9) and knife wounds (5). In 2022, the United Nations verified the killing of two children (1 boy, 1 girl) by JAS that had occurred in previous years.

237. Sexual violence perpetrated against four girls by JAS was verified in the Far North.

238. Responsibility for 28 attacks on schools (15) and hospitals (13), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (20), ISWAP (5) and the Cameroon Armed Forces (3) in South-West (14), North-West (9) and Far North (5). Incidents involved the looting and destruction of facilities, as well as abductions and attacks against protected persons.

239. In the Far North Region, 17 schools were military used by the Cameroon Armed Forces.

240. The abduction of 65 children (18 boys, 43 girls, 4 sex unknown) by unidentified perpetrators (44), JAS (17) and ISWAP (4) in Far North region was verified. In 2022, the United Nations verified the abduction of two children (1 boy, 1 girl) by JAS that had occurred in previous years.

241. A total of 13 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access attributed to unidentified perpetrators (11) and the Cameroon Armed Forces (2) in the North-West (10) and South-West (3) Regions were verified. Incidents involved robberies, extortion, the destruction of property and assaults on humanitarian personnel, including the killing of personnel.

### *Developments and concerns*

242. I welcome the fact that the Government and the United Nations conducted a joint assessment of children's needs in the transit centre in Meri, Far North region. I call upon the Government to use its findings to ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes treat children primarily as victims,

consider the specific needs and rights of children formerly associated with armed groups and allow child protection actors to have access to all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres.

243. I welcome the training of law enforcement officers on child protection in the North-West Region in cooperation with the United Nations. I call upon the Government to extend the training to all defence and security forces and to pursue its efforts to strengthen the protection of children, vacate schools being used for military purposes and prevent the further military use of schools, and to ensure accountability for grave violations against children.

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

245. I urge JAS and ISWAP to put an end to violations and immediately release associated children.

246. I am deeply concerned about the continued grave violations in the North-West and South-West Regions, particularly attacks on schools and hospitals, including the killing and abduction of protected persons, and the denial of humanitarian access, including the killing of humanitarian personnel. I urge all parties to immediately cease all violations.

### **Ethiopia**

247. The United Nations verified 270 grave violations against 187 children (93 boys, 39 girls, 55 sex unknown), between the age of 2 months and 17 years, including 1 boy who was the victim of multiple violations. The information does not represent the full scale of violations against children, as verification depends on many factors. A much larger number of allegations of recruitment and use was received and is under verification.

248. Five children (4 boys, 1 girl), aged between 13 and 17, were verified as having been recruited and used by unidentified perpetrators (3) and Tigrayan forces (2) in the states or regions of Amhara (3) and Tigray (2).

249. The killing (66) and maiming (107) of 173 children (85 boys, 33 girls, 55 sex unknown) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (132) (including as a result of explosive ordnance (58)), the Eritrean Defence Forces (16), the Ethiopian National Defence Forces (10), joint operations by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and the Eritrean Defence Forces (7), Tigrayan forces (3), joint operations by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and Amhara Special Force (2), joint operations by the Ethiopian National Defence Forces and Afar Special Force (2) and Oromo Liberation Front-Shene (1) in the states or regions of Tigray (162), Amhara (5), Afar (3), Oromiya (2) and Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (1).

250. Sexual violence was perpetrated against 5 girls, aged from 12 to 17, by unidentified perpetrators (4) and Oromiya Police (1) in the state of Oromiya (5).

251. A total of 77 attacks on schools by Gumuz People's Democratic Movement (73), unidentified perpetrators (3) and Tigrayan forces (1) in the states or regions of Binshangul Gumuz (73), Tigray (2), Amhara (1) and Afar (1) were verified.

252. Three schools (2) and hospitals (1) were used militarily by Tigrayan forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1) in the states or regions of Tigray (2) and Oromiya (1).

253. Five boys were abducted by Tigrayan forces (3) and unidentified perpetrators (2) in the states or regions of Amhara (2), Afar (2) and Tigray (1).

254. Five incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (3) and Tigrayan forces (2) in the states or regions of Tigray (4) and Oromiya (1).

*Developments and concerns*

255. I commend the signing of the Agreement for Lasting Peace through a Permanent Cessation of Hostilities, thereby enabling the resumption of humanitarian aid to conflict-affected areas, and the establishment of the National Rehabilitation Commission. I welcome and encourage the consideration of children's needs and their active participation in peacebuilding and transitional justice processes, and to treat them primarily as victims. I encourage the Government to facilitate the socioeconomic reintegration of children affected by armed conflict, with the United Nations and with the support of donors, and to prioritize all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes.

256. I welcome the constructive collaboration between the Government and the United Nations, including through technical and high-level visits of my Special Representative in May and June 2023, during which child protection and prevention measures were discussed, and during which it was agreed to formalize cooperation through an exchange of letters, and I encourage the Government to swiftly implement them.

257. I call upon all parties to comply with applicable international law, adopt concrete measures to end and prevent grave violations, unconditionally release associated children, and to protect schools and hospitals from attacks and facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded access to areas where affected children may be present.

258. I call upon the Government to expedite the clearance of areas contaminated by explosive ordnance and provide mine risk education as part of the measures agreed with my Special Representative, and call upon donors to support such operations.

**Lake Chad basin**

259. The United Nations verified 862 grave violations against 620 children (268 boys, 350 girls, 2 sex unknown) in the Lake Chad basin region, namely in Far North Region (Cameroon) (111), Lac Province (Chad) (100), Diffa Region (the Niger) (127) and the north-east of Nigeria (524). Among those children, 134 were victims of multiple violations. Violations were primarily perpetrated by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (412) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (149). Information pertaining to violations in the Far North Region of Cameroon and in north-east Nigeria is included under the respective country sections of the present report.

260. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 9 children (3 boys, 6 girls), between the ages of 15 and 17, in Lac Province (3) and Diffa Region (6), all by unidentified perpetrators.

261. The United Nations verified the killing (16) and maiming (6) of 22 children (8 boys, 14 girls) in Lac Province (4) and Diffa Region (18) by unidentified perpetrators (20), including 4 in crossfire between parties, and by the Niger security forces (2). Most child casualties resulted from gunshots (9) and shelling (6).

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



263. Two attacks on hospitals by unidentified perpetrators were verified in Diffa Region.

264. A total of 191 children (88 boys, 103 girls) were abducted in Lac Province (90) and Diffa Region (101) by unidentified perpetrators (190) and Chadian National Army (1). Among those, 1 child was killed and 37 were released or escaped, while the status of 153 children is unknown.

#### *Developments and concerns*

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

266. I welcome the commitment by the Government of the Niger to the protection of children, including through the national armed forces' engagement with the United Nations on human rights violations and humanitarian access and the revision of training material on child protection for the armed forces. These efforts should be pursued, including by incorporating such training into the curricula of military schools. I further welcome the efforts of the Government, with the support of the United Nations, to establish reintegration programmes benefiting over 200 children, including those formerly associated with armed groups.

267. I call upon the Governments of Chad and the Niger to continue to implement their respective handover protocols for children formerly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors.

268. I am concerned by the scale of grave violations against children, particularly girls, perpetrated by JAS and ISWAP, notably the abduction, killing and maiming of and the recruitment and use of children. I urge these groups to end and prevent all violations, including by engaging with the United Nations to adopt and implement action plans, and to immediately release all children.

### **Mozambique**

#### *Cabo Delgado*

269. The United Nations verified 309 violations against 172 children (82 boys, 90 girls) in Cabo Delgado Province, with 130 children who were victims of multiple violations.

270. The recruitment and use of 133 children (72 boys, 61 girls), some as young as 2 years old, by non-State armed groups (132) and Força Local (1) was verified. Children were used in combat and support roles.

271. Three boys were detained by the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces for alleged association with non-State armed groups. Two were released.

272. The killing (18) and maiming (1) of 19 children (18 boys, 1 girl), by non-State armed groups was verified.

273. Sexual violence against 17 girls by non-State armed groups was verified, including forced marriage (6).

274. Five attacks on schools (2) and hospitals (3) attributed to non-State armed groups were verified.

275. The military use of 12 schools and 1 hospital by the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (12) and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (1) were verified. Four schools continued to be used by the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces (3) and the Southern African Development Community Mission in Mozambique (1).

276. The abduction of 135 children (61 boys, 74 girls) by non-State armed groups was verified mostly for the purposes of recruitment and use (93) and sexual violence (13).

*Developments and concerns*

277. I welcome the training of the Mozambique Defence Armed Forces on the prevention of grave violations and the creation of a child protection focal point, as well as the engagement of the Government with my Special Representative, including through her visit in April 2023. I call upon the Government to extend the training to all security forces and I encourage the Government to continue to engage with the United Nations on a prevention plan, particularly through an expedited exchange of letters to that effect.

278. I welcome the engagement between the United Nations, the Government and international forces to end the military use of schools and hospitals and call upon the Government to urgently implement the Safe Schools Declaration. I further encourage the Government to expedite the issuance of a handover protocol, and to consider the endorsement of the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles), and the Vancouver Principles.

279. I condemn all grave violations against children. I am concerned by the number of incidents of recruitment and use, abduction and sexual violence, particularly of girls, specifically by armed groups, and by the military use of schools and hospitals. I appeal to all parties to the conflict to end and prevent grave violations against children and comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. I call upon armed groups to end and prevent all grave violations and to release associated children.

**Nigeria**

280. The United Nations verified 524 grave violations against 307 children (135 boys, 172 girls) in north-east Nigeria, including 139 children who were victims of multiple violations. In 2022, the United Nations verified 79 grave violations against 40 children (17 boys, 23 girls) that had occurred in previous years.

281. A total of 136 children (49 boys, 87 girls), between the ages of 8 and 17, were recruited and used by Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (118) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (17), mostly following abduction, and by the Nigerian Security Forces (1). Most girls (66) were victims of sexual violence during their association. The Nigerian Security Forces used a boy for domestic chores. In 2022, the United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 32 children (17 boys, 15 girls) by JAS (27) and ISWAP (5) that had occurred in previous years, in Borno State.

282. Some 40 children (35 boys, 5 girls), between the ages of 8 and 17, were detained by the Nigerian Security Forces for their alleged association with armed groups. All were released following United Nations advocacy.

283. The killing (22) and maiming (31) of 53 children (37 boys, 16 girls) by ISWAP (30), the Nigerian Security Forces (12), unidentified perpetrators (10) and JAS (1) were verified. The casualties were mostly the result of instances of crossfire and shelling.

284. Sexual violence perpetrated against 73 girls by JAS (58) and ISWAP (14) following their abduction, and by the Civilian Joint Task Force (1), was verified. In 2022, the United Nations verified sexual violence against 8 girls by JAS (5), ISWAP (2) and the Nigerian Security Forces (1) that had occurred in Borno, in previous years.

285. Ten attacks on schools (5), hospitals (5) and protected persons in relation to schools and hospitals were attributed to ISWAP. Incidents involved destruction and looting, as well as attacks and threats against, and the abduction of, protected persons.

286. A total of 246 children (96 boys, 150 girls) were abducted by JAS (193) and ISWAP (53). Most of the children (202) escaped, while 44 remain unaccounted for. Most children were abducted for the purposes of recruitment and use and/or sexual violence (134). In 2022, the United Nations verified the abduction of 39 children (17 boys, 22 girls) by JAS (34) and ISWAP (5) that had occurred in previous years, in Borno.

287. Six incidents of denial of humanitarian access were attributed to ISWAP (5) and the Nigerian Security Forces (1). Incidents involved threats against and the abduction of humanitarian workers, and the looting and disruption of humanitarian operations.

#### *Developments and concerns*

288. I commend the Civilian Joint Task Force for sustaining the implementation of the 2017 action plan, including through the establishment of 27 child protection units and trainings on child protection, in collaboration with the United Nations.

289. I welcome the adoption of the Child Rights Acts in Yobe State in June and Adamawa State in July, which provide a framework for the protection of conflict-affected children.

290. I commend the Government for the signing, with the United Nations, of a handover protocol for children encountered in military operations, and I urge its swift implementation. I call upon the Government to provide the United Nations with access to all children in detention, and to release all children from detention.

291. I welcome the efforts of the Government, with the support of the United Nations and partners, to reintegrate 4,235 children affected by conflict. I encourage the Government to continue to ensure the effective and gender-sensitive reintegration of all children released, in particular those children escaping from JAS. I appeal to the Government to pursue accountability efforts.

292. I am gravely concerned about the increase in the number of grave violations, particularly abductions, recruitment and use and sexual violence, mostly by JAS and ISWAP. I urge all parties to end and prevent violations and release abducted children.

293. I urge all parties to facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access, including for children in remote areas.

#### **Pakistan**

294. A total of 23 grave violations against 20 children (3 boys, 17 sex unknown) were reported. Children were reportedly killed (3) and maimed (17) by unidentified armed elements. Incidents included casualties caused by explosive remnants of war (9), improvised explosive devices (6) and gunshots (5).

295. Three attacks on schools were also reported, including an attack involving the use of improvised explosive devices against a girls' middle school.

*Developments and concerns*

296. I welcome the endorsement of the Vancouver Principles and the appointment of a national focal person on child protection.

297. I encourage the Government to engage with my Special Representative to develop measures to protect children. Such engagement may lead to the removal of Pakistan as a situation of concern from my next report, should all agreed practical measures be fully implemented.

298. I am concerned about incidents in the border areas with Afghanistan and about attacks against schools.

**Philippines**

299. The United Nations verified 34 grave violations against 27 children (21 boys, 6 girls). In addition, four grave violations against three children (2 boys, 1 girl) that had occurred in previous years were verified in 2022.

300. The recruitment and use of 11 children (10 boys, 1 girl) attributed to the New People's Army (NPA) (9), Abu Sayyaf Group (1) and Dawlah Islamiyah-Maute Group (1) was verified. Children were used in combat (3), for support roles (5) and for unknown purposes (3).

301. The detention of 6 boys by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (5) and the Philippines National Police (1) was verified.

302. The killing (10) and maiming (9) of 19 children (14 boys, 5 girls) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (8), NPA (5), Dawlah Islamiyah-Hassan Group (3), the Armed Forces of the Philippines (2) and Dawlah Islamiyah-Maute Group (1). In addition, in 2022 the United Nations verified the maiming and killing of two boys by unidentified perpetrators in incidents that had occurred in previous years.

303. An incident of sexual violence that affected one girl and was perpetrated by a member of the Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units, prior to the reporting period, was verified in 2022.

304. Three attacks on schools, including protected persons in relation to schools, by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (2) and Philippines National Police (1) were verified.

305. The abduction of a girl by the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Citizen Armed Forces Geographical Units in Quezon, which occurred prior to the reporting period, was verified in 2022.

306. One incident of denial of humanitarian access by NPA (1) was verified.

*Developments and concerns*

307. I welcome the training of military personnel on the Armed Forces of the Philippines Protocol on Handling Children in Situation of Armed Conflict, on human rights and on international humanitarian policies.

308. I welcome the training of personnel from the Bangsamoro Human Rights Commission on the monitoring and reporting of grave violations against children.

309. I am concerned by the number of children killed and maimed by explosive ordnance. I call upon the Government to invest in explosive ordnance clearance and risk education. I urge all parties to end and prevent violations and reiterate my call upon listed armed groups to engage with the United Nations to adopt action plans.

310. I further call upon the Government to endorse the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups (the Paris Principles) and the Safe Schools Declaration. I call upon the Government to fully implement its national policy framework of 2019 on learners and schools as zones of peace.

### **Ukraine**

311. The United Nations verified 2,334 violations against 1,482 children (629 boys, 474 girls, 379 sex unknown), including 91 children who were victims of multiple violations. The information does not represent the full scale of violations against children, as verification depends on many factors, including access.

312. A total of 92 children were used by Russian armed forces (91) and Ukrainian armed forces<sup>7</sup> (1) as human shields (90), as a hostage and for domestic chores (1) and for intelligence-gathering (1).

313. The United Nations verified the detention of six boys. Four boys were detained by Russian armed forces and subjected to ill-treatment and/or torture. Two boys were deprived of liberty by Ukrainian authorities on national security grounds, with one boy subjected to ill-treatment. As at 31 December, one boy, who turned 18 while in detention, remained in detention, one had escaped three had been released. The status of one boy is unknown.

314. The United Nations verified the killing (477) and maiming (909) of 1,386 children (626 boys, 471 girls, 289 sex unknown) attributed to Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups<sup>8</sup> (658: 136 killed, 518 maimed), Ukrainian armed forces (255: 80 killed, 175 maimed) and unidentified perpetrators, mostly caused by air strikes (473: 261 killed, 212 maimed). Most child casualties resulted from the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects (1,206) and explosive ordnance (64).

315. Rape (1) and other forms of sexual violence (2) perpetrated against three girls between the ages of 4 and 17 were verified and attributed to the Russian armed forces in Kyiv region (2) and Chernihiv region (1).

316. Some 751 attacks on schools (461) and hospitals (290), including attacks on protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, were verified and attributed to Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups (480), Ukrainian armed forces (212) and unidentified perpetrators (59). Most attacks involved the use of explosive weapons with wide area effects. Incidents involved damage (577), destruction (151), looting (17) and threats (6). Among those attacks, 20 resulted in child casualties.

317. The United Nations verified the military use of 23 schools and 7 hospitals by Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups (24), Ukrainian armed forces (4) and unidentified perpetrators (2).

318. The United Nations verified the abduction of 92 children, including 91 children abducted by Russian armed forces, as reported in paragraph 312 above. One child was abducted and taken to Belarus and another child was used as a hostage in exchange for civilians and prisoners of war. All 92 children were released. In addition, the United Nations verified the transfer of 46 children to the Russian Federation from areas of Ukraine that, in part, are or have been under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation, including children forcibly separated from parents, children removed from schools and institutions without the consent of guardians, and a child who was given Russian citizenship.

319. The United Nations verified 10 incidents of the denial of humanitarian access attributed to Russian armed forces. Incidents involved the denial of access to cross the front line to deliver humanitarian assistance (8) and attacks on aid distribution points (2).

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<sup>7</sup> Ukrainian armed forces include affiliated Ukrainian militias and combatants.

<sup>8</sup> Affiliated armed groups include pro-Russian militias and combatants.

*Developments and concerns*

320 I welcome the engagement of the Government of Ukraine with my Special Representative to end and prevent grave violations against children, following the request in my previous report (A/76/871-S/2022/493, para. 313), including through a visit by my Special Representative on 11 and 12 May 2023. I welcome the practical measures that have been established, including explosive ordnance risk education, the appointment of a national focal point on children and armed conflict and the establishment of an interministerial committee on children and armed conflict. I further welcome the engagement of the Government with the United Nations to develop a joint prevention plan.

321. I am concerned by the number of grave violations against children by Ukrainian armed forces presented in my report, which does not represent the full scale of incidents. I am particularly disturbed by the high number of children killed and maimed and by the attacks on schools and hospitals. I urge Ukrainian armed forces to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, as set out in paragraph 341 of the present report.

322. I welcome the engagement of the Government of the Russian Federation with my Special Representative to end and prevent grave violations against children following the request in my previous report (A/76/871-S/2022/493, para. 313), including through a visit by my Special Representative on 18 and 19 May 2023. I welcome the practical measures that have been established and I urge the Russian Federation to quickly adopt all measures discussed with my Special Representative, as set out in paragraph 340 of the present report.

323. I am appalled by the high number of grave violations against children in Ukraine following the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, as presented in my report, which does not represent the full scale of incidents, as verification depends on many factors, including access, and many are still under verification. I am particularly shocked by the high number of attacks on schools and hospitals and protected personnel and by the high number of children killed and maimed attributed to the Russian forces and affiliated armed groups. I am also disturbed by the reports of abduction, recruitment and use, sexual violence against children and military use schools and hospitals. I urge Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to immediately implement measures to protect children and to prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and their military use. I urge Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups to urgently adopt measures to end and prevent these grave violations, and to pursue accountability.

324. It is imperative that, all efforts by the United Nations to provide humanitarian assistance to children in Ukraine be prioritized by all parties to conflict, in order to facilitate safe, timely and unimpeded humanitarian access to children in these areas.

325. I am concerned by the detention of children, and I urge all parties to ensure that children are detained as a last resort and for the shortest period of time, and to cease all forms of ill-treatment.

326. I am troubled by reports, some of which were verified by the United Nations, of children transferred to the Russian Federation from areas of Ukraine that, in part, are or have been under the temporary military control of the Russian Federation. I urge the Russian Federation to ensure that no changes are made to the personal status of Ukrainian children, including their nationality. I further urge all parties to ensure that the best interests of all children are upheld, including by facilitating family tracing and reunification of unaccompanied and/or separated children who find themselves across borders or lines of control without their families or guardians. I urge parties to the conflict to give child protection actors access to these children to facilitate family reunification and I request my Special Representative to assess with United Nations entities and partners ways to facilitate such processes.

## IV. Recommendations

327. I remain concerned by the scale and severity of grave violations against children. I urgently call upon all parties to comply with their obligations under international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international refugee law and to immediately end and prevent grave violations.

328. I welcome the continued engagement by parties to conflict with the United Nations to develop and implement action plans and other commitments to protect children. I reiterate my call upon Member States to continue to support this engagement, including by facilitating United Nations engagement with non-State actors. I request my Special Representative and the country task forces and equivalent arrangements to engage with all parties to end and prevent grave violations, including through engagement with regional organizations, and to strengthen the monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict in coordination with United Nations system entities.

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

330. I call upon Member States to become parties to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, if they have not yet done so. I urge Member States and parties to conflict to consider every human being below the age of 18 years as a child in line with article 1 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I call upon Member States to endorse and implement the Paris Principles, the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles.

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

332. I am deeply concerned by the numbers of children deprived of liberty, many arbitrarily, and by their ill-treatment. I reiterate that detention should be used only as a last resort and for the shortest period of time, that alternatives to detention should be prioritized and that children should be treated exclusively within child justice systems, that children should never be detained or prosecuted solely for their or their parents' actual or alleged association with armed groups. I urge Member States to treat children actually or allegedly associated with armed forces or groups, including those designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations, primarily as victims, to prioritize their best interest, and to give child protection actors access to them. I encourage Member States to adopt and implement handover protocols for children encountered or detained during military operations to civilian child protection actors and to provide them with reintegration support.

333. I call upon Member States, in line with the principle of non-refoulement, to take measures for the release, protection, repatriation and reintegration of children with

alleged links to Da'esh who are held in camps and places of detention in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, in line with international law and Security Council resolutions. I am concerned about the impact of counter-terrorism measures on children, and I call upon Member States to ensure their consistency with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other relevant international instruments.

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

335. I urge all parties to undertake clearance of explosive ordnance and provide risk education regarding explosive ordnance and assistance to victims. I urge Member States to become parties to and to implement all conventions on landmines, explosive remnants of war and cluster munitions, if they have not yet done so, and I call upon donors to provide financial and technical assistance.

336. I call upon parties to conflict to refrain from using explosive weapons in populated areas. I encourage Member States to endorse and adhere to the commitments set out in the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas, including the commitments pertaining to avoiding civilian harm.

337. I call upon the donor community to provide long-term financial support for sustainable, timely, gender- and age-sensitive, survivor-centred, and inclusive programmes, including reintegration for victims of grave violations, and to address the specific needs of children with disabilities. I encourage donors to provide funding for monitoring and reporting on grave violations against children and for strengthening child protection capacities on the ground.

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

## **V. Lists contained in the annexes to the present report**

339. In Burkina Faso, Islamic State in the Greater Sahara has been listed under section A of annex II for the killing and maiming of children. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Mouvement du 23 mars has been listed under section A of annex I for killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals and abduction. Mai-Mai Zaïre has been listed under section A of annex I for the killing and maiming of children. Twigwaneho has been listed under section A of annex I for recruitment and use of children.

340. In Ukraine, Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups have been listed under section B of annex II in consideration of their engagement with my Special Representative for attacks on schools and hospitals and for killing of children, in particular through the use of explosive weapons with a wide-impact area, including shelling from heavy artillery, multiple-launch rocket systems, missiles and air strikes in populated areas. I urge the Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law and to urgently finalize and implement their commitments to protect children, including by avoiding the military use of schools and hospitals, putting in place accountability and reparations measures, exchanging information with the



United Nations on all children identified in conflict-affected areas and increasing the provision of access to all children in conflict zones, as well as securing humanitarian corridors as relevant and requested.

341. Furthermore, owing to the high number of children killed and maimed and of attacks on schools and hospitals by Ukrainian armed forces, I urge Ukrainian armed forces to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, and to immediately implement measures to protect children and to prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and end their military use, as well as prevent the use of children for intelligence-gathering. I will be particularly attentive to this situation in the preparation of my next report.

342. The following parties were previously listed and have had additional violations added to their listing. In Burkina Faso, because of an increase of attacks on schools and hospitals, Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin has been listed under section A of annex II for this violation. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Allied Democratic Forces have been listed under section A of annex I for rape and other forms of sexual violence. The Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO) has been listed under section A of annex I for the abduction of children. In Myanmar, the Myanmar armed forces (see the change in terminology in para. 347 below) have been listed under section A of annex I for attacks on schools and hospitals and abduction, following an increase in these violations.

343. Other modifications to the list have resulted from changes in the landscape of armed conflict in the respective situations or from changes in measures taken by parties to protect children. In Yemen, the Security Belt Forces have been listed in section B of annex I in recognition of their continued participation in activities organized under the 2018 road map adopted to expedite the 2014 action plan signed with the Government of Yemen.

344. In Iraq, the Popular Mobilization Forces have been delisted for the violation of recruitment and use of children owing to a decrease in this grave violation attributed to them, and the signature of an action plan to prevent the recruitment and use of children. The delisting is conditional upon the finalization of all pending action plan activities and the continued absence of recruitment and use of children by the Popular Mobilization Forces. A continued United Nations monitoring and engagement period of 12 months will ensure the sustainability of all existing measures, as verified by the United Nations, and continued engagement with my Special Representative and the United Nations. Any failure in this regard would result in a relisting for the same violation in my next report.

345. In Myanmar, the Myanmar armed forces (see the change in terminology in para. 347 below) remain listed under section B of annex I for the recruitment and use of children. I remain concerned by the levels of recruitment and use in 2022, notwithstanding the signature of a joint action plan in 2012 with the United Nations. I urge the Myanmar armed forces to reverse this negative trend, to strengthen its engagement with the United Nations and to implement the provisions of its joint action plan. Any failure in this regard would result in being listed in section A of annex I in my next report for the recruitment and use of children.

346. In Somalia, the Somali Federal Defence Forces and the Somali Police Force remain listed under section B of annex I. I remain concerned by the levels of recruitment and use, killing and maiming, and rape and other forms sexual violence in 2022, notwithstanding the signature of action plans in 2012 with the United Nations. I urge the Somali Federal Defence Forces and the Somali Police Force to reverse this negative trend, to strengthen their engagement with the United Nations and to implement the provisions of their joint action plans. I urge the Government to strengthen and expedite the implementation of its commitments to combating

conflict-related sexual violence. Any failure in this regard would result in being listed in section A of annex I.

347. Modifications to terminology and to names of parties resulting from changes on the ground are aimed at reflecting the names of parties more accurately. In Afghanistan, Hizb-i Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar has been listed as Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin, and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan Province has been listed as Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan to align with other United Nations reporting. In Mali, Ansar Eddine, as part of Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin (JNIM), has been listed as Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, including Ansar Eddine to reflect the fact that JNIM regroupes various factions aligned with Al-Qaida. In Myanmar, the Tatmadaw Kyi, including integrated border guard forces, has been listed as the Myanmar armed forces, which is understood to include the integrated border guard forces, to align with other United Nations reporting. In Nigeria and the Lake Chad basin, Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad and Islamic State West Africa Province, has been listed separately as Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad and as Islamic State West Africa Province to reflect more adequately the configuration of the armed groups. In South Sudan, the South Sudan People's Defence Forces, including the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces, has been listed as the South Sudan People's Defence Forces following the integration of the Taban Deng-allied South Sudan People's Defence Forces into the South Sudan People's Defence Forces and their ceasing to independently engage in armed conflict. In Yemen, the Security Belt Forces has been listed under State actors following the formation of the Presidential Leadership Council.

348. In my previous report (A/76/871-S/2022/493, para. 250), I welcomed the engagement of the Government of India with my Special Representative and noted that that engagement may lead to the removal of India as a situation of concern. I note the technical mission of the Office of my Special Representative in July 2022 to identify areas of cooperation for child protection, and the workshop on strengthening child protection, held in Jammu and Kashmir in November 2022 by the Government, with the participation of the United Nations. I call upon India to implement the remaining measures identified in consultation with my Special Representative and the United Nations, including the training of armed and security forces on child protection, the prohibition of the use of lethal and non-lethal force on children, including by ending the use of pellet guns, ensuring that children are detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and to prevent all forms of ill-treatment in detention, and the full implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. In view of the measures taken by the Government to better protect children, India has been removed from the report in 2023.

349. In view of the gravity and number of violations reported and, where possible, verified in Haiti between September 2022 and March 2023 (recruitment and use, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, and denial of humanitarian access), this situation will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report.

350. In view of the gravity and number of violations perpetrated by armed groups that were reported and, where possible, verified in the Niger between January and December 2022 in the context of the enhanced monitoring in the Central Sahel region that I requested in paragraph 301 of my previous report (recruitment and use, killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, abduction, and denial of humanitarian access), this situation will be added as a situation of concern with immediate effect and will be included in my next report.

## Annex I

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

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

##### **Parties in Afghanistan**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Hizb-i Islami Gulbuddin<sup>a,b</sup>
2. Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant-Khorasan<sup>a,b,d</sup>
3. Taliban forces and affiliated groups, including the Haqqani Network<sup>a,b,d,e</sup>

##### **Parties in the Central African Republic**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Local militias known as the anti-balaka<sup>a,b,c</sup>
2. Lord's Resistance Army<sup>a,b,c,e</sup>

##### **Parties in Colombia**

###### *Non-State actors*

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

##### **Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

###### *Non-State actors*

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

\* 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.

<sup>a</sup> Party that recruits and uses children.

<sup>b</sup> Party that kills and maims children.

<sup>c</sup> Party that commits rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

<sup>d</sup> Party that engages in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.

<sup>e</sup> Party that abducts children.

<sup>f</sup> 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).

7. Mai-Mai Apa Na Pale<sup>a,c,e</sup>
8. Mai-Mai Mazembe<sup>a,b,e,f</sup>
9. Mai-Mai Simba<sup>a,c</sup>
10. Mai-Mai Zaïre<sup>b</sup>
11. Mouvement du 23 mars<sup>b,c,d,e</sup>
12. Nduma défense du Congo-Rénové<sup>a,b,c</sup>
13. Nyatura<sup>a,c,e</sup>
14. Raia Mutomboki<sup>a,c,e,f</sup>
15. Twigwaneho<sup>a</sup>

#### **Parties in Iraq**

##### *Non-State actors*

Da'esh<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>

#### **Parties in Mali**

##### *Non-State actors*

Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, including Ansar Eddine<sup>a,c</sup>

#### **Parties in Myanmar**

##### *State actors*

Myanmar armed forces<sup>b,c,d,e</sup>

##### *Non-State actors*

United Wa State Army<sup>a</sup>

#### **Parties in Somalia**

##### *Non-State actors*

1. Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a<sup>a</sup>
2. Al-Shabaab<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>

#### **Parties in the Sudan**

##### *Non-State actors*

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

#### **Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic**

##### *Non-State actors*

1. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham<sup>a,b</sup>

2. Da'esh<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>
3. The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam<sup>a</sup>

#### **Parties in Yemen**

##### *Non-State actors*

1. Al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula<sup>a</sup>
2. Pro-government militias, including the Salafists and popular committees<sup>a</sup>

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

#### **Parties in the Central African Republic**

##### *Non-State actors*

Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique, Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique and Union pour la paix en Centrafrique as part of the former Séléka coalition<sup>a,b,c,d,f</sup>

#### **Parties in the Democratic Republic of the Congo**

##### *State actors*

Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo<sup>c,f</sup>

#### **Parties in Mali**

##### *Non-State actors*

1. Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, part of the Coordination des mouvements de l'Azawad<sup>a,c,f</sup>
2. Platform, including affiliated groups<sup>a,f</sup>

#### **Parties in Myanmar**

##### *State actors*

Myanmar armed forces<sup>a,f</sup>

##### *Non-State actors*

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

#### **Parties in Somalia**

##### *State actors*

1. Somali Federal Defence Forces<sup>a,b,c,f</sup>

2. Somali Police Force<sup>a,b,c,f</sup>

### **Parties in South Sudan**

#### *State actors*

South Sudan People's Defence Forces<sup>a,b,c,e,f</sup>

#### *Non-State actors*

Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition – pro-Machar<sup>a,b,e,f</sup>

### **Parties in the Syrian Arab Republic**

#### *State actors*

Government forces, including the National Defence Forces and pro-government militias<sup>a,b,c,d</sup>

#### *Non-State actors*

1. Kurdish People's Protection Units and Women's Protection Units (YPG/YPJ)<sup>a,f</sup>
2. The opposition Syrian National Army, including Ahrar al-Sham and Army of Islam<sup>b</sup>

### **Parties in Yemen**

#### *State actors*

Security Belt Forces<sup>a</sup>

#### *Non-State actors*

Houthis (who call themselves Ansar Allah)<sup>a,b,d,f</sup>

## Annex II

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

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

##### **Parties in Burkina Faso**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Islamic State in the Greater Sahara<sup>b</sup>
2. Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin<sup>a,b,d,e</sup>

##### **Parties in the Lake Chad basin**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Islamic State West Africa Province<sup>e</sup>
2. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad<sup>e</sup>

##### **Parties in Nigeria**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Islamic State West Africa Province<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>
2. Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad<sup>a,b,c,d,e</sup>

##### **Parties in the Philippines**

###### *Non-State actors*

1. Abu Sayyaf Group<sup>a</sup>
2. Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters<sup>a</sup>
3. New People's Army<sup>a</sup>

\* 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.

<sup>a</sup> Party that recruits and uses children.

<sup>b</sup> Party that kills and maims children.

<sup>c</sup> Party that commits rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

<sup>d</sup> Party that engages in attacks on schools and/or hospitals.

<sup>e</sup> Party that abducts children.

<sup>f</sup> 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).

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

**Parties in Ukraine**

*State actors*

Russian armed forces and affiliated armed groups<sup>b,d</sup>

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