



Secretary-General António Guterres
 United Nations Headquarters, S-3800
 New York, NY 10017

May 31, 2022

Re: 2022 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict

Dear Mr. Secretary-General,

We are writing with regard to your forthcoming annual report on children and armed conflict (CAAC). As you finalize your decisions regarding the annexes and inclusion of other situations of concern, we urge you to ensure the publication of a complete list of perpetrators of grave violations that is evidence-based and accurately reflects data collected and verified by the United Nations Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). We further encourage you to draw attention to additional contexts where there is credible evidence that grave violations against children have been committed, by designating these contexts as ‘other situations of concern.’

As nongovernmental organizations working to alleviate suffering in humanitarian settings and protect human rights, we strongly support UN Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions on CAAC, as concrete tools for improving the protection of children in war. The MRM, the annual CAAC report, and its annexed list of perpetrators are a crucial foundation for enhancing the protection of children, ending and preventing violations, and contributing to accountability. These tools are central to drawing the attention of the Security Council to the situation of children, providing an analysis of the variety of violations committed against children, and paving the way for the UN’s engagement with parties to conflict. However, these mechanisms will only remain powerful if they are credible and consistently applied to all perpetrators in all contexts.

We reiterate our call to ensure that all parties to conflict responsible for committing a pattern of grave violations against children are listed in the annexes in accordance with the criteria set out in the 2010 annual CAAC report (S/2010/181). Furthermore, parties should only be delisted once they have signed and fully implemented an action plan to end and prevent grave violations against children and ceased commission of the violation(s) for which they are listed for at least one full reporting cycle (i.e., one year), per the same 2010 criteria.

Civil society has previously expressed its disappointment with significant disparities between the evidence presented in the annual CAAC report and the perpetrators listed in the annexes.¹ In 2020, for example, the Saudi- and Emirati-led Coalition was prematurely removed from the annexes of the annual report (S/2020/525), despite being responsible for killing and maiming 222 children in Yemen during that reporting period. The 2021 annual report (S/2021/437) attributed the killing and maiming of 194 children to the Coalition, yet it was not re-listed for this violation.

Of similar concern, Israeli government forces have never been listed in the annexes despite the UN finding them responsible for over 6,700 child casualties between 2015 and 2020.² In just an 11-day period, from May 10 to May 21, 2021, the UN found Israeli forces responsible for killing 66 children³ and injuring hundreds more in intensive airstrikes—the worst escalation of violence since 2014. During this period of escalated violence, Palestinian armed groups were reportedly responsible for killing seven Palestinian children⁴ and two Israeli children.⁵

Bringing additional situations of concern to the attention of the Security Council is in line with your emphasis on prevention and early warning. As such, we urge you to include Ethiopia, Mozambique, Niger, and Ukraine as situations of concern in the forthcoming report. There is a clear pattern of credible evidence that parties to these conflicts have committed grave violations against children, including during the 2021 reporting period covered in the forthcoming report. The inclusion of these countries as other situations of concern would help to expand the tools available to protect children affected by armed conflict in these contexts.

As you finalize this year's report and make your decisions regarding listings and the inclusion of new situations of concern, we urge you to take into account the recommendations made by the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict in its "Credible List"⁶ policy note published in April 2022.

We look forward to the publication of your annual report and reaffirm our call for a complete and accurate list of perpetrators of grave violations against children, as a strong and effective tool for promoting the protection of children in armed conflict and accountability for violations against them.

Sincerely,

1. Amnesty International
2. CARE International
3. Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
4. Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
5. Defence for Children International (DCI)
6. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
7. Global Justice Center
8. Human Rights Watch
9. International Bureau for Children's Rights
10. International Rescue Committee
11. Nonviolent Peaceforce
12. Norwegian Refugee Council
13. Plan International
14. Save the Children
15. War Child
16. Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
17. Women's Refugee Commission
18. World Vision International

Cc: Ms. Virginia Gamba, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

¹ See, for example, previous open letters dated [May 12, 2021](#), [June 22, 2020](#), [May 11, 2020](#), [May 24, 2019](#). See also: Eminent Persons Group, Keeping the Promise: An Independent Review of the UN's Annual List of Perpetrators of Grave Violations Against Children, 2010-2020, March 2021, <https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/eminent-persons-group-report-final.pdf>.

² Annual reports of the Secretary-General on CAAC, 2016-2021, available at: <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/virtual-library/>.

³ UN Human Rights Council, Situation of Human Rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Including East Jerusalem, with a Focus on the Legal Status of the Settlements, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in the Palestinian Territories Occupied Since 1967* (A/HRC/47/57), July 29, 2021, <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/47/57> (accessed May 11, 2022), para. 8. See also: UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Data on Casualties, <https://www.ochaopt.org/data/casualties>.

⁴ Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P), “2021 Is Deadliest Year for Palestinian Children Since 2014,” December 10, 2021, <https://www.dci-palestine.org/2021-is-deadliest-year-for-palestinian-children-since-2014> (accessed May 18, 2022).

⁵ Action on Armed Violence (AOAV), “A List of Children Killed in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict (10 May – 21st May 2021),” May 26, 2021, https://aoav.org.uk/2021/a-list-of-children-killed-in-the-palestinian-israeli-conflict-10-may-21st-may-2021/#_edn58 (accessed May 18, 2022).

⁶ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, “A Credible List”: Recommendations for the Secretary-General’s 2022 Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict, April 2022, <https://watchlist.org/publications/a-credible-list-recommendations-for-the-secretary-generals-2022-annual-report-on-children-and-armed-conflict/> (accessed May 18, 2022).