2020:

Gender matters

Save the Children

CHILDREN'S FOREWORDS

Children have nothing to do with the causes of armed conflicts, yet we are the ones most affected by it – exposed to hunger and disease, displaced, tortured, killed, sexually abused, deprived of education, trafficked, separated from parents, recruited as child soldiers. When will children's suffering end?

When I advocate for girls' rights in conflict, I am reminded of all the stories of sisters discriminated against because of their sex. As girls, our voices are silenced, our wings clipped. Here in Nigeria, discrimination is worse for girls living in conflict-affected areas. Some are forced into early marriage by their parents as a means of economic survival and protection. I stand in sympathy and solidarity with them – and with millions of girls in similar situations around the world. Children living in conflict areas like Northeast Nigeria can only live for today, not knowing if there will be a tomorrow. This has to change.

World leaders must focus on upholding children's rights in conflict. We want a world where children like me enjoy the right to life, free expression, education, health care, and other basic rights and social services. A world where we have the opportunity to grow up, fulfil our dreams, help our siblings, parents and community, and positively influence the future of our country. Countries cannot harvest what they didn't sow. The better the rights of children are protected today, the more peaceful and livable our communities will be in the future. When children know their rights, they can speak for themselves and others – and cannot be intimidated. We can ask questions and demand a response.

I hope that the evidence gathered in this report will result in governments and other stakeholders carrying out specific actions to ensure children's rights are upheld and that children are included in the decision-making processes that affect us. The representatives of children in these processes should come from all walks of life regardless of sex, level of education, family resources, or origin.

Leaders should understand that if we are not heard today, we cannot speak tomorrow.

Purity, girls' rights advocate, age 14, Nigeria

Growing up as a child in a country like Colombia is really difficult. It is not easy to develop in an environment where violence in all its facets is seen and lived on a daily basis, and where children are not seen as actors in building a peaceful society. We hear all the time that children are the future. But those words are not accompanied by the actions of adults.

Abandoned by families and schools, many children's development, education and participation are permeated with despair. In Colombia there are very few ways for children to participate. It is not in the culture to think that the voices of children count. If things were different, different stories could be born.

My dream for the children of my country is that we can grow up healthy and free to enjoy our childhood. That we can enter spaces where we feel safe to speak and know that our voice counts. And that we are taught and learn to live in peace from a young age. Parents must support their children in this – as with education, children's participation in decision-making begins at home.

My message to world leaders is to recognise that children in Colombia live in different situations and are affected by conflict in different ways. As children, we need opportunities.

Everything you do for someone matters, that is where change begins.

José, children's rights advocate, age 15, Colombia

Ghazal, age eight, lives in a small village in Kabul province, Afghanistan. She is walks to school by herself but dreads it – she is afraid of being kidnapped, of stepping on a landmine and of a suicide attack. As a girl, she also faces a higher risk of harassment.

PHOTO: STEFANIE GLINSKI / SAVE THE CHILDREN

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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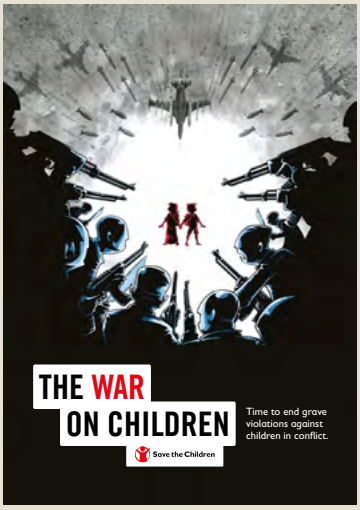
Save the Children

Previous reports on the war on children:

Stop the war on children – protecting children in 21st century conflict, 2019



The war on children – time to end grave violations against children in conflict, 2018

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"When ISIS took over our town, the fighting got worse. I feel so much older than I am because of the war. I feel like an old woman even though I am 16."

Safaa, 16, Syria

The war on children

This is the third report in Save the Children's 'Stop the War on Children' series. It reveals shocking trends in the threats to the safety and wellbeing of children living in areas impacted by conflict. In 2018, verified grave violations against children reached a record high.

415 million children worldwide are living in a conflict zone, including 149 million children living in high-intensity conflict zones where more than 1,000 battle-related deaths occur in a year.

Overall, the number of children living in conflict zones is highest in Africa, with 170 million in total. Proportionately, the Middle East has the highest share with almost 1 out of 3 children in the region living in conflict zones.

Conflict is becoming increasingly dangerous for children. Since 2010, the number of children living in conflict zones has increased by 34%. At the same time, the number of verified incidents of grave violations against children have risen by 170%.

While there is no doubt that children engage in a variety of activities in humanitarian response design as well as in building and sustaining peace, their voices are not sufficiently heard and their potential remains both under-recognised and underfunded.

Girls, boys and conflict

Alongside these overall numbers, this latest report starts to delve into the differences between boys' and girls' experiences of conflict through a gendered analysis of verified grave violations. This highlights that:

Girls are at far higher risk of sexual and other forms of gender-based violence, including child, early and forced marriage. Boys are much more likely to be exposed to killing and maiming, abductions and recruitment.

Gendered understandings of conflict combined with persistent gender roles result in a focus on public-sphere violations that are more often experienced by boys, and that are easier to identify and verify than private-sphere violations. By contrast, violations in spaces that girls are more likely to occupy are often unseen or ignored by others, rendering experiences of sexual violence and violations against girls and children of diverse gender identities under-reported and invisible.

Challenges in monitoring, reporting and verifying violations – due to limited access to affected areas, security concerns and sensitivity associated with violations – mean that the true scale of violations affecting children is under-reported. The influence of gender on certain violations, such as sexual violence against boys or the recruitment and use of girls, can result in even lower rates of reporting.

There are particular challenges in understanding and responding to rights violations experienced by children of diverse gender identities. Reporting mechanisms, when they are disaggregated at all, continue to rely on binary data representations of gender. As a result, the experiences of children of all genders and the full impact of violations against them are unknown.

"I can still remember everything. That's why I'm still upset," says eight-year-old Diana. When her family home was bombed, her parents sold what was left and escaped. The flight was long and dangerous. At times the family was split up and living on the street. She is now in a camp in Dohuk in Iraq.

PHOTO: AYTUNC AKAD / PANOS / SAVE THE CHILDREN

ACT NOW

The facts and stories presented in this report paint an unacceptable reality. We urge the international community, states, armed groups and all other key stakeholders to step up their efforts to effectively protect children in conflict. As set out in our previous 'Stop the War on Children' reports, we believe states must take action in three areas:

- uphold international norms and standards
- hold perpetrators of violations against children to account
- enable children to recover from conflict and take practical action to protect them from harm

Additionally, in order to recognise and respond to the specific needs of boys, girls and children of diverse gender identities and of different ages, states and humanitarian actors must ensure their responses to protect children in conflict are sensitive to differences between ages and genders. We call on states and humanitarian actors to:

- Support the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict financially and diplomatically to ensure that data collection through the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism is sex-disaggregated whenever possible, and support the office's work with parties to conflict so that action plans specifically address the ways in which all the six grave violations affects the genders. In addition, states and the humanitarian actors must develop, resource and implement strategies that specifically identify and address the wider impact of conflict on girls, boys and children of diverse sexual orientation and gender identities. This should go beyond the six grave violations to include other violations of children's rights in conflict, such as those in the private sphere where girls are more likely to be impacted.
- Increase multi-year investment in humanitarian child protection with the aim of growing its proportion of total humanitarian funding from 0.5% to 4%, including substantially increasing funding for both mainstreamed and targeted interventions on gender equality, girls' empowerment, and sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings.
- Ensure meaningful participation for children in responses and programmes, and when possible always disaggregate target beneficiaries by age, sex, and disability, and tailor responses accordingly.

For a full list of recommendations, see page 40.

1

INTRODUCTION: THE WAR ON CHILDREN

"When fighting breaks out, no place is safe in our village, but home is still better than outside. We hide in the corners of rooms."

— 14-year-old girl, Afghanistan

Children bear a disproportionate burden in conflict. The latest number of UN-verified grave violations against children in conflict shows yet again an increase.

The six grave violations:

- killing and maiming of children
- recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups
- abduction of children
- attacks on schools or hospitals
- denial of humanitarian access
- rape and other forms of sexual violence against children.

This report explores the different degrees to which each of the six grave violations affects boys and girls. And it also looks more broadly at how gender plays a role in the impact of conflict on children.

Alongside a year-on-year rise in the grave violations against children, there has been an overall and significant rise in the number of children living in conflict. Over the last three decades, the number of children living in conflict zones has nearly doubled, reaching 415 million in 2018. Since 2010, the number of UN-verified grave violations against children has almost tripled.

During this period, conflicts have also become more protracted. The year 2019 marked 18 years of conflict in Afghanistan between international forces and the Taliban. Not a single child living in the country today was born into peace. In March 2020 the war in Syria is set to enter its tenth year and in Yemen it will be five years since the escalation of hostilities. Successive generations of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Somalia and what is now South Sudan have grown up knowing no other circumstances than conflict.

The protraction of contemporary conflicts has changed the nature of the risks children face – and as a consequence, the type of protection and assistance they need. The effects of conflict on children are multiple and wide-ranging. They include the physiological impact of explosive weapons; mental health and psychosocial consequences of witnessing and experiencing violence; and the socio-economic impact – and egregious consequences for children's rights – of eroding infrastructure, displacing communities and damaging basic services and support.

The exposure of large numbers of children to these harmful effects is driven by three core deficiencies:

- lack of compliance with international rules, laws and norms
- failure to hold perpetrators of violations to account
- insufficient practical action to support children and enable their recovery.

While these challenges are significant and widespread, it is important to recognise that progress is not only possible but already taking place. In 2019 we celebrated that 101 states, representing more than half of the UN member states, have signed the Safe Schools Declaration and committed to keep schools safe during armed conflict. 110 states have endorsed the Paris Principles and commitments focused on ending the recruitment and use of children in armed forces or armed groups. The International Criminal Court (ICC) has launched an investigation into crimes against the Rohingya, while at the time of writing the International Court of Justice (IJC) is deliberating over measures to prevent genocide and seek justice

for previous offences. States have accepted an amendment to the Rome Statute to include starvation as a weapon of war in situations of non-international armed conflicts. Peace talks in Yemen continue. Listed perpetrators of grave violations against children have signed three new UN Actions Plans to address harm to children.

These examples are testament to what is possible and should serve as a call to action to those with influence at the national, regional and international levels. It is only through concerted and deliberate efforts that we can reverse current trends and stop the war on children.

As part of this endeavour, it is essential to recognise that conflict affects children in different ways depending on age, gender and disability. Boys and girls face different risks, have different needs, are represented in the data differently, and require different types of support. Building on the two previous reports in our 'Stop the War on Children' series, this 2020 report will unpack, where available data allows, some of the evidenced gendered drivers and impacts of the grave violations committed against children in conflict-affected areas. ●

DESPAIR, RESILIENCE, AND HOPE

When Kalonji's village in the Democratic Republic of Congo was attacked by an armed group, his father was killed and his home torched. "Now I'm an orphan," he says. "No father, no mother."

Kalonji fled with his brothers and sisters. Alone, they walked 70 km to reach safety. But in their new surroundings, day-to-day survival is a struggle.

"There are days I don't eat," he says. "I brought nothing [from my old home]. No books. I need clothes, a school uniform, books and food."

Kalonji is determined to get an education and build a better future for himself and his community. At school his favourite subject is maths. "When I finish my studies here, I will go to Lubumbashi to start university," he says.

His dream is one day to become the head of his school. "I'm studying to be the director of the school," he says. "I want to study so I can train the children."

PHOTO: JOAN MARIE DEL MUNDO / SAVE THE CHILDREN

2

HOW MANY CHILDREN ARE AFFECTED BY CONFLICT?

In 2018, 415 million children worldwide were living in a conflict zone.[1] That's almost 18% – or one in six – of all the world's children. That includes 149 million children living in high-intensity conflict zones – ie, zones that experienced more than 1,000 battle-related deaths within the year.[2]

The number of children living in conflict zones has more than doubled since 1995 – far outstripping population growth. From 2017 to 2018 there was a slight decline of 3% in the overall number of children living in conflict, while the number of children living in high-intensity conflict zones dropped by 12%.[3]

The four countries with the highest number of children living in high-intensity conflict zones are Nigeria, Mexico, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Afghanistan. In regional terms, Africa has the largest absolute number of children – 170 million – living in conflict zones.

One in four African children is living in conflict. The region with the highest proportion of children living in conflict zones is the Middle East, with 32% – one in three children – living in conflict.

Since 2010, there has been a 34% rise in the total number of children living in conflict zones, but a 170% rise in the number of UN-verified incidents of grave violations against children in conflict.

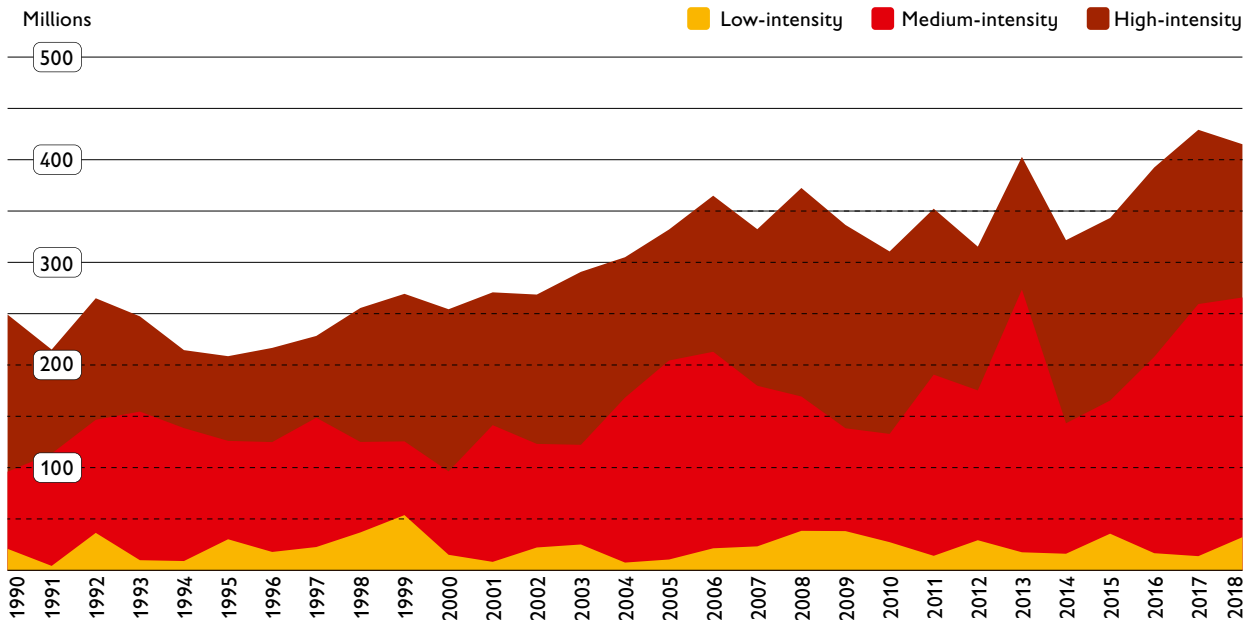


FIGURE 1

Number of children living in high-, medium- and low-intensity conflicts, by year.

SOURCE: SEE NOTE PAGE 11

2010

Since 2010, there has been a 170% rise in the number of verified incidents of grave violations against children in conflict.

2018

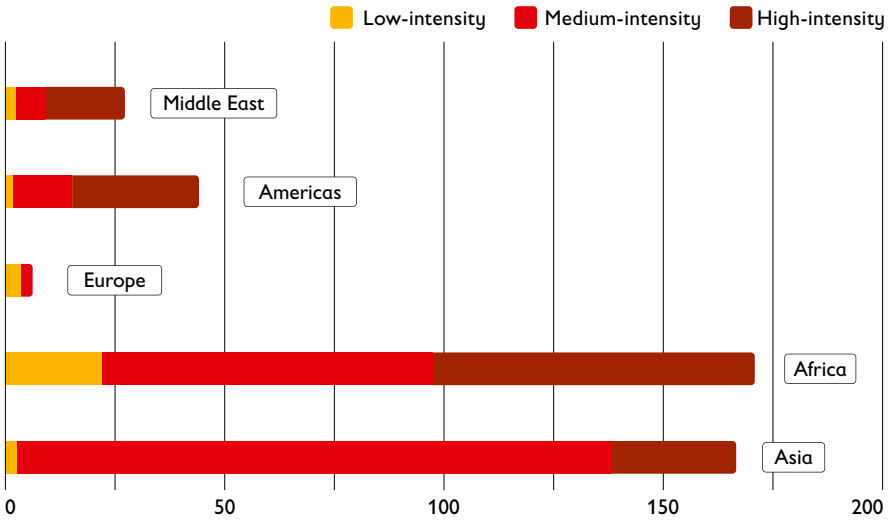


FIGURE 2

Number of children living in high-, medium- and low-intensity conflicts, by region.

SOURCE: SEE NOTE BELOW

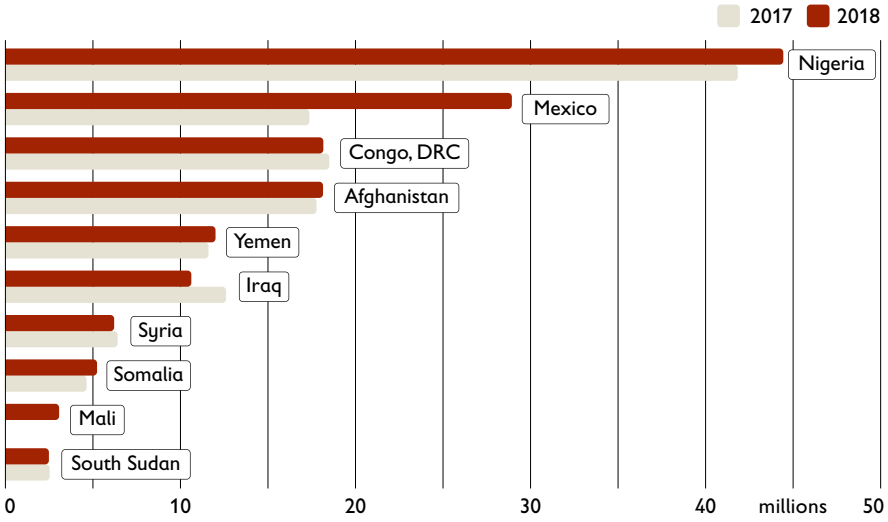


FIGURE 3

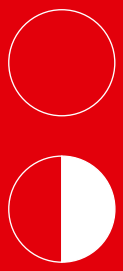
Number of children living in high-intensity conflict zones in 2017 and 2018, by country.

SOURCE: SEE NOTE BELOW

SOURCES FIGURE 1–3

These numbers are prepared for Save the Children by the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO). Low-intensity conflict is defined as less than 25 battle-related deaths in a country-year, medium-intensity conflict as 25–999 battle-related deaths, and high-intensity conflict as 1,000 or more battle-related deaths.

DATA SOURCES: UPPSALA CONFLICT DATA PROGRAM (UCDP) GEOREFERENCED EVENT DATASET (GED) (SUNDBERG AND MELANDER, 2013; HÖGBLADH, 2019); GRIDDED POPULATION OF THE WORLD (GPW) V4 (CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EARTH SCIENCE INFORMATION NETWORK, 2016); AND WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS (UN, 2019).



KNOWING ONLY WAR

In Afghanistan, October 2019 marked 18 years since the start of the conflict between coalition forces and the Taliban. Every child in the country – 20 million children in total – was born and is being raised in a state of war.[8] In Syria, in December 2018, the UN reported that after eight years of fighting, 4 million children – half of the country's children – have only ever known war.[9]

The ten worst conflict-affected countries to be a child

Using research from the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO)[4] and Save the Children's own analysis of the UN's data on grave violations in 2018[5], we have identified the ten worst conflict-affected countries for children.[6] The assessment is based on:

- prevalence of the six grave violations against children in conflict (see page 16)
- conflict intensity measured by the number of recorded casualties
- total child population living in conflict zones
- proportion of children living in conflict zones relative to the population of the country.

Using this approach, in alphabetical order, the current ten worst conflict-affected countries to be a child are:

- Afghanistan
- Central African Republic
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Iraq
- Mali
- Nigeria
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

In our analysis, Syria comes out as particularly dangerous and damaging for children in 2018, with high numbers of grave violations against children and 99% of children living in areas affected by conflict. Afghanistan has the most children who have been killed and maimed. The highest number of children in conflict suffering sexual violence is in Somalia. Nigeria has the highest number of children recruited into armed groups. The ten worst countries for children living in conflict remain the same as 2017.[7]

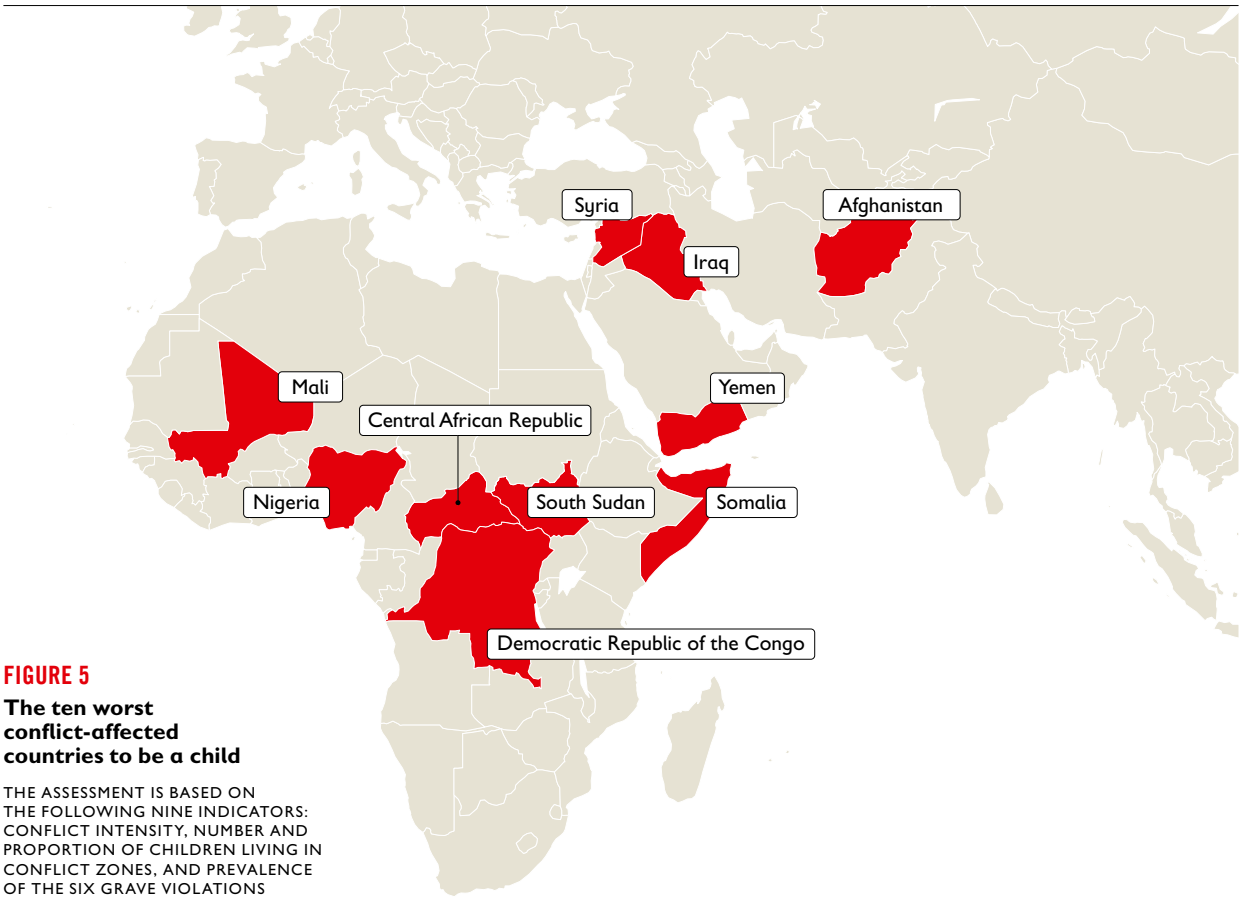


FIGURE 5

The ten worst conflict-affected countries to be a child

THE ASSESSMENT IS BASED ON THE FOLLOWING NINE INDICATORS: CONFLICT INTENSITY, NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF CHILDREN LIVING IN CONFLICT ZONES, AND PREVALENCE OF THE SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN.

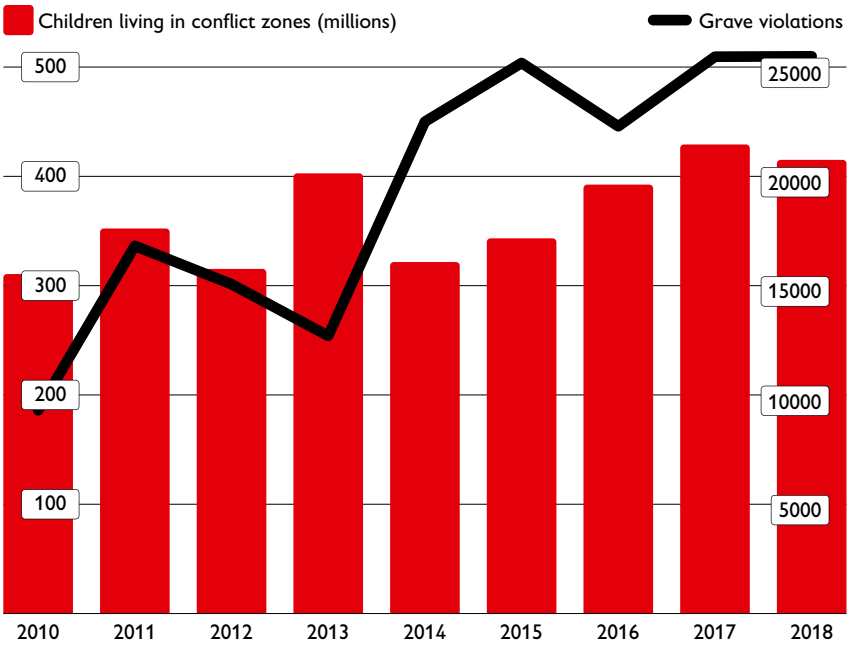


FIGURE 4

Number of children living in conflict zones (bars) and UN-verified incidents of grave violations against children, 2010–2018 (line)

SOURCE: SAVE THE CHILDREN'S ANALYSIS OF THE UN SECRETARY GENERAL'S CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT REPORTS / PRIO'S CALCULATION BASED ON UCDP GED DATASET, GRIDDED POPULATION OF THE WORLD V4, (CIESIN, 2016) AND WORLD POPULATION PROSPECTS (UN, 2019)

Amal left the besieged city of Homs in Syria at the age of seven and sought refuge in Lebanon. She is a very quiet girl and cries very often as she is very close to her grandmother who had to remain in Homs. When the photographer Dominic Nahr is taking a portrait of Amal, something rather unusual happens: for just a short moment, the sad child turns into a confident girl.

PHOTO: DOMINIC NAHR / SAVE THE CHILDREN

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL PROVISIONS ADDRESSING CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN CONFLICT SETTINGS

The Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols are at the core of international humanitarian law (IHL), which regulates the conduct of armed conflict and seeks to limit its effects. The principles of 'distinction' and 'proportionality' are the basis for specific rules, such as the prohibition of direct attacks on civilian populations or civilian objects, the prohibition of indiscriminate attacks, and the obligation to adopt precautionary measures to avoid or limit to the greatest possible extent casualties among civilians and damage to civilian objects. IHL also includes special protection for children, including provisions for the protection of education. Under IHL, states bear the primary responsibility for ensuring that the basic needs of civilians and civilian populations under their control are met; but if they are unable or unwilling to meet this obligation, relief action can be taken by others, such as humanitarian organisations, who must be granted rapid and unimpeded access to the affected population.

The UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) is the most widely ratified treaty in the world. It defines children as people under the age of 18 and recognises and protects their equal and indivisible social, civil, political, economic, and cultural rights. By setting the minimum standards and overarching principles by which every society should treat every child, the UNCRC has played a critical role in catalysing progress for children over the last 30 years. It establishes the principles that the best interest of the child; the right to life, survival and development; and respect for the views of the child, shall be a primary consideration. Article 38 specifically addresses the rights of children in armed conflict, requiring states to take "all feasible measures" to protect and care for children affected by armed conflict. The Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict was adopted in 2000; it establishes the principle of non-recruitment and non-participation in armed conflict of children under the age of 18 years. Significantly, unlike many other major treaties the UNCRC does not have a derogation clause which would allow a suspension of law under particular circumstances.

The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child of 1990 is notable as the only intergovernmental treaty other than the UNCRC to recognise and protect the full spectrum of social, civil, political, economic, health and cultural rights of children. It has been ratified by almost all states of the African Union. Article 22 directly addresses the use of children in armed conflict, prohibiting their recruitment as soldiers and direct participation in fighting wars.

The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is a human rights framework particularly of relevance to girls affected by armed conflict. Unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1995, following the Fourth World Conference on Women hosted in Beijing, China, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action is the first human rights framework to explicitly reference girls' distinct experiences and needs. The Beijing Platform for Action contains a subsection and set of strategic objectives on girls' rights to ensure that girls everywhere are able to grow up protected, educated and healthy. The declaration and platform for action is endorsed by all UN Member States and sets out strategic objectives and the actions that stakeholders including governments, international and non-government organisations, the media and private sector must take to achieve them. The commitments made in the Beijing Platform for Action are applicable to girls living in all contexts, including commitments to ensure that girls are safe from sexual and gender-based violence, able to receive an education, and able to exercise their rights to be agents of change in their own lives. 2020 is the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action and the commitments made to girls; a year-long review process to gauge progress and next steps is under way.

The Rome Statute is the principal instrument of international criminal law with respect to the protection of civilians, granting the ICC jurisdiction over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes when committed by any individual in the territory of a signatory state or by nationals of that state, or in a situation referred to the ICC by the UN Security Council.[10]

In addition to these, there is also an important body of international criminal law that has arisen from ad hoc tribunals and courts, including the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, the international criminal tribunals for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and the Special Court for Sierra Leone. The latter was the first international court to try perpetrators for violations of IHL relating to the recruitment of children. These tribunals have also broken new ground in defining gender-based crimes. In addition, the UN Security Council and UN General Assembly have passed resolutions that carry the force of international law both on specific conflict situations and on relevant thematic areas. These include children and armed conflict; women, peace and security; the protection of civilians; and youth, peace and security. The UN Security Council is the only UN body with authority under the UN Charter to issue a binding resolution on all UN members.

3

GIRLS, BOYS AND WAR: A GENDER ANALYSIS OF THE SIX GRAVE VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN IN CONFLICT

"In Mali, the situation is really critical and it's very sad. Many children have been killed, others are raped, others saw their brothers killed in front of them. People have been burned, fields have been destroyed. We need our government to hold perpetrators to account and to protect us from the horrors of war."

Maryam, youth ambassador, Mali[11]

As the previous chapter shows, the number of children living in conflict and of violations against them are escalating. But looking beneath the headline numbers, what is children's experience of conflict? How are different groups affected? In particular, how is children's experience of conflict and violations against them different for girls and for boys?

This chapter explores gender differences in the six grave violations against children in conflict. Gathering robust evidence to help us understand girls' and boys' experiences of conflict – and to develop effective responses – is hugely challenging. We therefore begin this chapter by looking at the strengths and weakness in the available data.

Every child counts, but not every child is counted: opportunities and limitations in the available data

The UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict and the reports of the UN's Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM)[12] on grave violations committed against children provide some of the best indicators of the situation of children in armed conflict. Our analysis of differences and similarities between girls' and boys' experiences of conflict therefore draws mainly on these sources.

However, it is important to acknowledge that the data presented in the report has significant limitations. There are a number of challenges with the existing data.

1 Limited mandate

The MRM methodology informing the UN Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict is designed to report on six specified grave violations. It is not within the mandate to measure broader categories of rights violations against children during conflict, so the data does not accurately and comprehensively reflect how all children, and of all genders, experience conflict. In addition, the MRM is not designed to measure the prevalence of grave viola-

1 Killing and maiming of children P. 20
2 Recruitment and use of children by armed forces or armed groups P. 21
3 Abduction of children P. 26
4 Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children P. 28
5 Attacks on schools or hospitals P. 36
6 Denial of humanitarian access P. 38

tions within affected populations. The MRM therefore offers a valuable yet distorted reflection. In order to inform a comprehensive response, its data must be complemented with other monitoring and reporting systems, as well as contextualised analysis.

2 Under-reporting
It is widely acknowledged that all the grave violations against children in conflict, and sexual violence in particular, are significantly under-reported. Verified cases of violations against children – 25,451 violations in 2018 – are the tip of the iceberg. Undertaking accurate documentation of grave violations against children is challenging in times of peace, and even more so in times of conflict. The MRM, for example, is limited by access restrictions, security threats and inadequate child protection resources within UN peacekeeping and humanitarian operations.

3 Incomplete data disaggregation
Incomplete data disaggregation by sex, age, and also disability, limits our understanding of the impact of grave violations on different groups of children. Although the MRM guidelines state that data on children and armed conflict should be disaggregated between boys and girls, this is not always recorded. And when it comes to children who do not identify with binary definitions of gender, data is non-existent. The data also does not include a record of age.

Nevertheless, while recognising these deficiencies, it is important to acknowledge the progress that has been made in disaggregating data by sex. In the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on children and armed conflict, more than three-quarters of verified individual violations[13] – 17,500 out of 22,764 – are disaggregated between girls and boys.[14] The extent of disaggregation varies considerably from country to country. In Somalia, all data related to individual grave violations is sex-disaggregated; in Libya none of it is.

The sex-disaggregated data provides us with an opportunity to identify some of the patterns, differences and gendered dynamics within the grave violations. Overall, 4,190 violations were against girls, 13,310 against boys. While boys make up the largest overall share of verified violations, the vast majority of verified incidents of rape and other forms of sexual violence relate to girls (see page 28).

Individual violations document how many children are victims of the specified violations. There are further challenges with sex-disaggregation when it comes to what could be described as "collective violations"[15] – for example, attacks on schools and hospitals or denying humanitarian access.

4 Invisibility of violations against girls
As noted in the Gender Analysis: The six grave violations of children's rights in conflict,[16] "the grave violations are linked primarily to the public sphere where men and boys are frequently more present" while violations against girls are constrained to more private spaces where "violations of their rights are less likely to be documented".[17] In many contexts, an individual's mobility and ease of movement and presence in the public sphere is dictated by underlying gender norms. Most commonly, women and girls are relegated to the private sphere and expected to perform gendered roles as mothers, wives and caretakers. As conflict increases, girls and women are more likely to have their mobility severely limited, resulting in more time spent within the home than men and boys.[18] This can at times reduce the incidence and prevalence rates of girls to grave violations such as abduction, recruitment, and killing and maiming. By contrast, men and boys are more often targeted for active combat roles by armed groups because of the association of masculinity with defending homes and communities. It is important to recognise that gender roles vary in different conflict settings. In some cases, gender roles and power relations may shift – creating an opportunity for change. However, it is more common for existing gender biases to become more entrenched in conflict, with girls facing greater restrictions on their movements, for example.

The limitations on girls' freedom of movement in conflict contexts impacts their access to information and services, including humanitarian response efforts, and also drives other private-sphere rights

violations that are exacerbated in conflict contexts, including intimate partner and domestic violence and child, early and forced marriage.[19] However, as these private-sphere violations are not perpetrated by armed actors, they fall outside the mandate of the MRM and are not considered or accounted for in the agenda of the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict.

Gendered roles and expectations, combined with the focus in the UN data on violations committed by armed groups and forces likely to be committed in the public sphere, result in greater attention and weight afforded to rights violations experienced by boys in conflict, often rendering violations experienced by girls invisible and under-reported. The sex-disaggregated data of the 2019 report confirms this – namely that more boys than girls are directly affected by the verified grave violations. The exception here is the data on the grave violation of sexual violence, which shows the opposite (see page 28). While evidence demonstrates that girls are significantly more vulnerable to sexual violence, the stigma of sexual violence against boys and the lack of services to respond to the needs of male survivors make it even less likely that such incidents will be reported.

Addressing the data gaps: what's needed

To better understand the effects of conflict on children and to prioritise and deliver effective responses, more in-depth age, gender and disability-sensitive prevalence analysis is required. By comparing such prevalence analysis with MRM findings, it will be possible to understand the extent to which the MRM is effective in reaching (and counting) all children who have experienced grave violations.

Outside the MRM methodology, there is a need for more gendered studies of secondary violations – in other words, other ways girls, boys and children of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE) are affected by living in conflict. There is also a need to better understand how girls and boys with disabilities are impacted by conflict, how conflict causes the number of children living with disabilities to rise, and how to better design programmes that are accessible and inclusive for persons with disabilities. ●

CHILDREN AND DISABILITY IN CONFLICT

According to the World Health Organization, about 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability.[20] Worldwide, one child in ten has a disability – and the proportion is even higher in areas with armed conflict or disasters.[21] Research among Syrian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon suggests that as many as one child in five has a disability, and that more than 60% of Syrian refugee households includes a person with disability.[22]

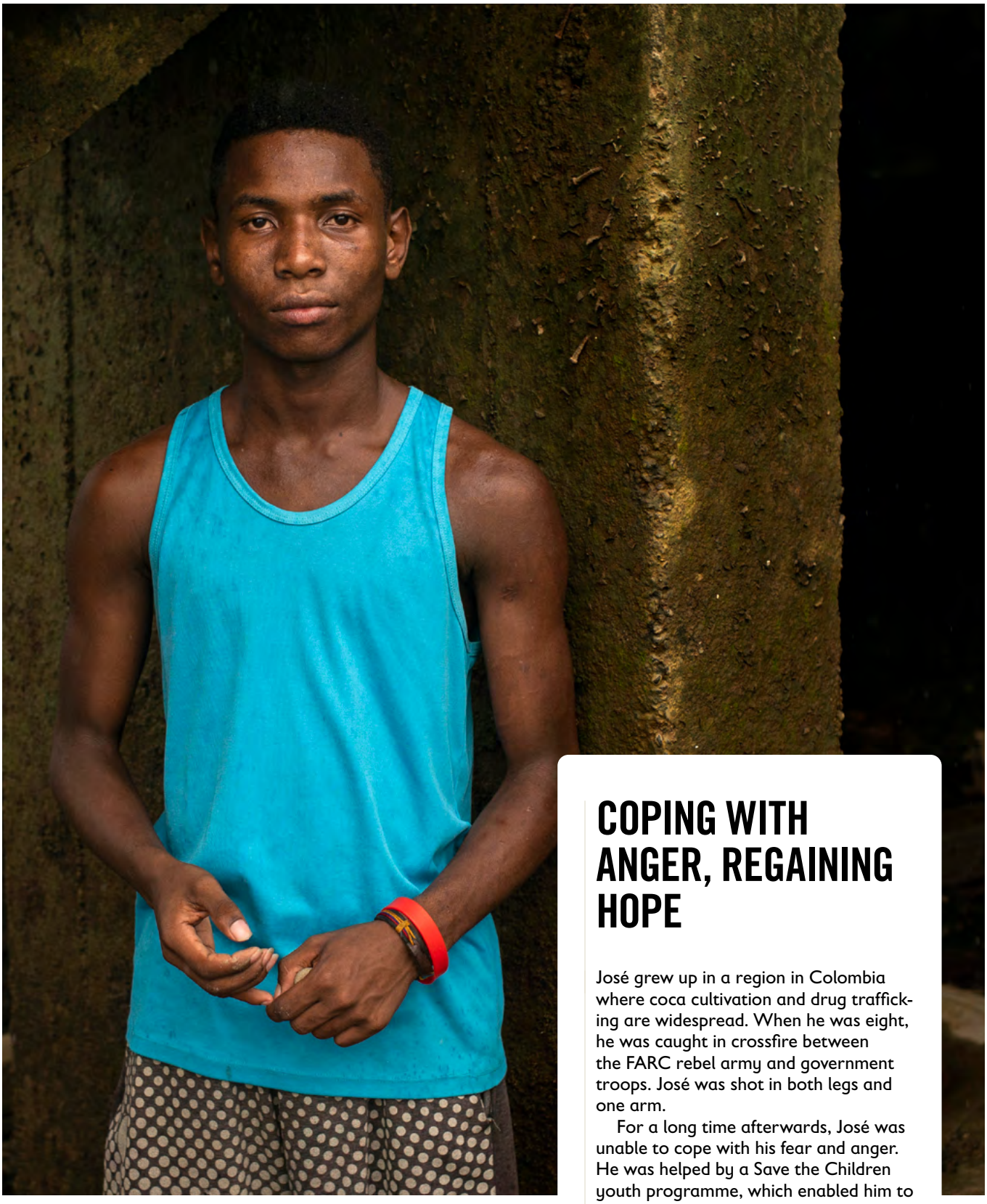
Article 11 of The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) says that States Parties shall take "all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict."[23]

Children with disabilities are impacted by all six grave violations, and the violations may also cause disability. They might acquire disabilities for the first time, experience the exacerbation of existing disabilities, or develop secondary disabilities.[24] As our data shows, the number of children killed and maimed in conflict reached a record high in 2018, leaving thousands of children disabled.

In humanitarian contexts, children with disabilities are more likely to experience psychological distress due to separation from caregivers, breakdown of routine, or high risk of abuse.[25]

Women and girls with disabilities are at increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including through the use of SGBV as a strategy, tactic or policy in war.[26] A recent report by the Geneva Academy points out that even though there are reports of women and girls with disabilities being subjected to conflict-related violence, there has still not been gathered systematic data on the issue.[27]

A positive development, although not addressing children or gender specifically, is that in 2019 the UN Security Council adopted its first-ever resolution on protection of persons with disabilities in conflict.[28]



COPING WITH ANGER, REGAINING HOPE

José grew up in a region in Colombia where coca cultivation and drug trafficking are widespread. When he was eight, he was caught in crossfire between the FARC rebel army and government troops. José was shot in both legs and one arm.

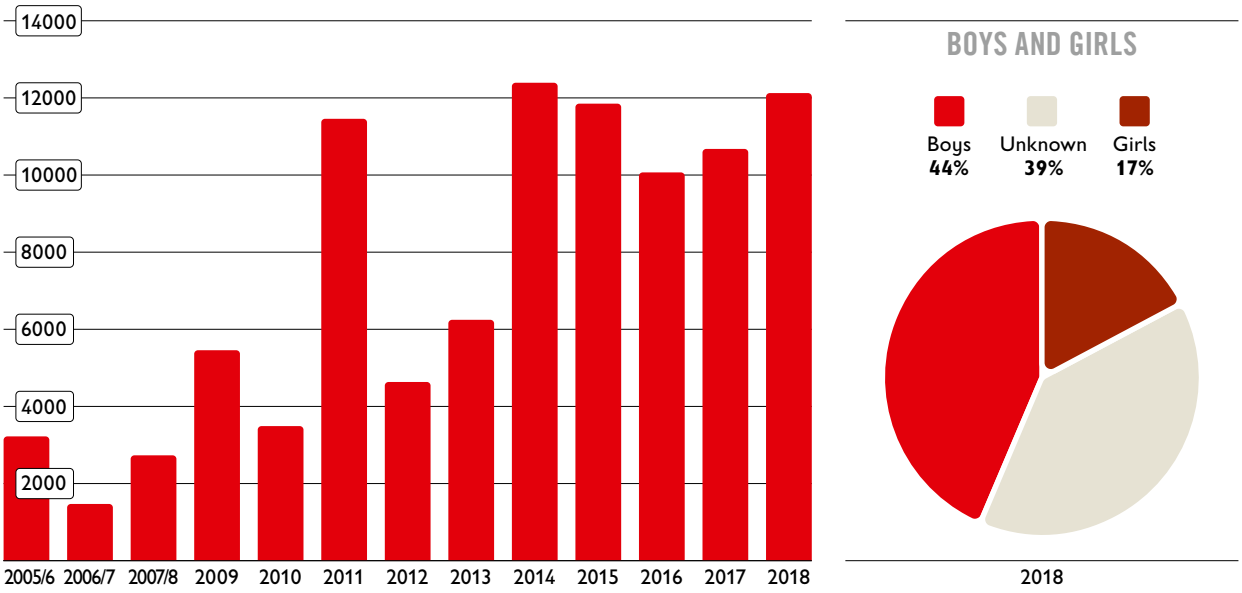
For a long time afterwards, José was unable to cope with his fear and anger. He was helped by a Save the Children youth programme, which enabled him to develop new viewpoints, discover a new role for himself – and regain hope.

Now 17, José says: "I've learned to be more critical of what's happening around me and get involved in decisions that affect me or the people I work with."

PHOTO: DOMINIC NAHR / SAVE THE CHILDREN

1

KILLING AND MAIMING OF CHILDREN



Since 2005, almost 100,000 children have been killed or maimed in conflict. Since 2010, the numbers have tripled. In 2018, across 19 of the 20 conflict situations covered, there were 12,125 verified cases of children being killed or maimed. 44% of these cases are recorded as boys, 17% girls, and for the rest, the sex has not been documented.[29] These figures are likely to be an underestimation of true levels of harm.[30]

In Afghanistan in 2018, a total of 3,062 children are recorded as having been killed or maimed, including 831 girls. Children represented 28% of all confirmed civilian casualties. The number of children killed and maimed saw a slight drop from 2017, but the number of children killed was the highest-ever recorded.[31] More than half of these children were killed and maimed by ground engagements and improvised explosive devices.[32] A study of nearly 700 parents and children across Afghanistan found that armed clashes remain the most significant threat to children's safety.[33] The number of children in the occupied Palestinian territories killed or maimed more than doubled between 2017 and 2018, with 59 children killed and 2,756 injured.[34]

In all the countries where data is disaggregated in the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on children and armed conflict, the number of boys killed and maimed by direct warfare is overwhelmingly higher than that of girls. The specific vulnerability of boys, particularly adolescents, reflects the ways in which cultural gender norms influence when and where girls and boys spend the majority of their time. Boys are often expected, and permitted, to be outside in the community more than girls, who may spend more time at home. This affects boys' exposure to crossfire, unexploded ordnance and explosive remnants of war.[35] Boys, particularly adolescents, are more likely to be targeted by armed actors because they are perceived as a threat.

In Syria, in 2013, more than twice as many boys were killed than girls.[36] This gender disparity was even more remarkable when analysed together with age: among children aged 13 to 17, four times more boys have were killed in conflict than girls; between boys and girls under eight, the ratio was 1:1.[37] Explosive weapons accounted for 74% of girls' deaths; adolescent boys were more likely to have been killed by small arms.[38] Moreover, adolescent boys may be perceived as threats and/or enemy combatants.

By contrast, in Nigeria in recent years more girls have been used in suicide attacks than boys. UNICEF reported that in Nigeria in 2018, 38 girls and 10 boys were used in suicide attacks, and in 2017, 101 girls and 45 boys.[39] Researchers have pointed out that the use of girls and women in this way offers certain tactical and strategic advantages that derive from gendered norms and expectations, with girls and women more likely to be perceived as non-threatening, or as victims rather than perpetrators.[40]

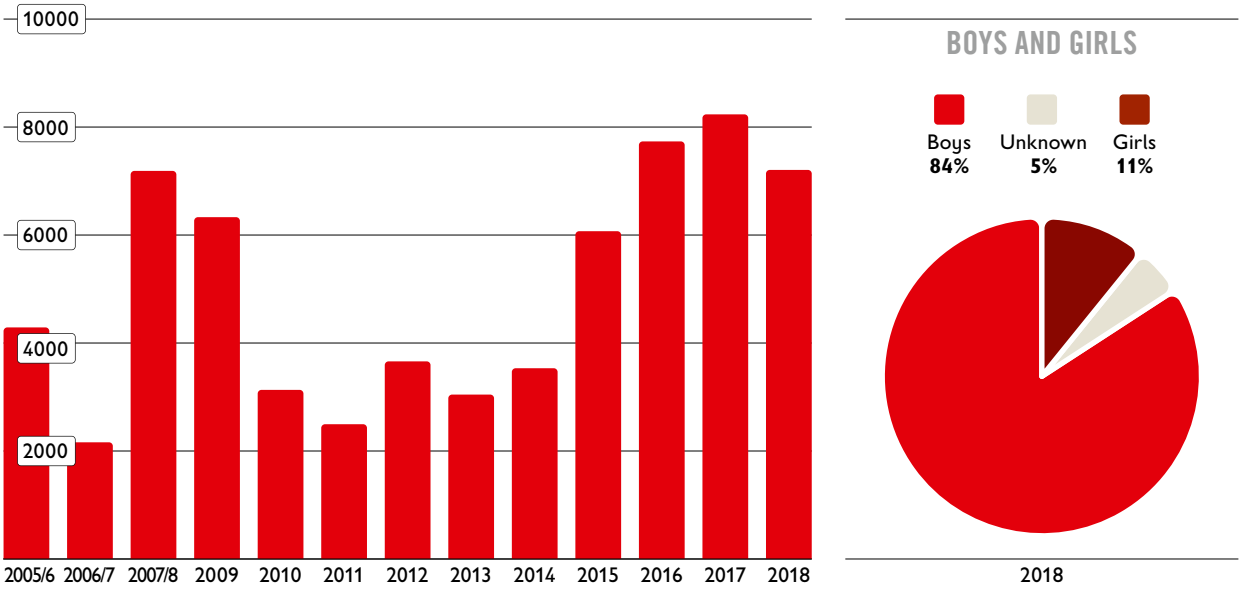
FIGURE 6

The number of children killed and maimed in conflict, by year, and breakdown by sex in 2018.

SOURCE: VERIFIED CASES FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

2

THE RECRUITMENT AND USE OF CHILDREN BY ARMED FORCES AND ARMED GROUPS



Between 2005 and 2018, a total of 65,081 children are verified to have been recruited and used by armed forces and groups.[41] In 2018 alone, more than 7,000 children were recruited; most of the verified cases were from Somalia (2,300) and Nigeria (1,947). Many of these children were abducted, used as combatants, forced to act as human shields, sexually abused and exploited, used to transport explosives or deployed as suicide bombers.[42]

The recruitment or use of children in armed forces and groups is reported in 15 out of the 20 conflict situations covered in the report.[43] For 12 of these countries, data is fully disaggregated by sex, in two it is partly so, and in the remaining country, Colombia, there is no sex-disaggregated data. Out of the 7,206 cases of recruitment documented in 2018, boys account for 84%, girls for 11%, and the remaining 5% are not specified by sex.

A 2015 report from South Sudan shows that only one-third of the boys associated with armed groups were recruited forcibly and violently. Some boys, for example, joined armed groups as they felt a responsibility to defend their communities from attack, which is in itself an internalised gender norm.[44]

In every conflict covered by the MRM, boys appear to have been targeted and recruited on a much larger scale than girls. In 2018, in Mali, 96% of children recruited were boys, in Somalia, 97%, and in Afghanistan, 98%. Children may be recruited because they are cheaper to recruit and train; for strategic reasons – as in the example of the use of young girls used in suicide attacks in Nigeria, or because they are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. Armed groups often use gendered recruitment tactics, including a hyper-masculine ideology and imagery that equate power with violence, promises of sexual rewards and 'wives' for soldiers.[45]

FIGURE 7

The number of children recruited and used by armed forces and armed groups, by year, and sex breakdown in 2018.

SOURCE: VERIFIED CASES FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

The original formulation of this violation was 'the recruitment and use of child soldiers';[46] it was changed to 'the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups' to better reflect the different roles boys and girls are forced to undertake in an armed group. These roles include working as guards, spies, combatants and suicide bombers, carrying out support functions such as cooking, and being subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation. Boys and girls may have multiple roles at any one time and their roles are likely to change during the period of their association.

Although the wording for this violation was broadened to reflect boys' and girls' multiple roles in armed groups, the data may still fail to appropriately reflect the many girls recruited to armed forces. The

ESCAPED FROM CAPTORS

As a young boy, Peter lived in South Sudan with his aunt and sister. But when fighting broke out in their neighbourhood, Peter fled alone. Separated from his aunt and sister, he lived in the bush with other displaced people. He was ten.

An armed group recruited Peter into their ranks. He was taught to load and shoot a gun and made him cook, wash clothes and carry equipment.

"They gave us weapons for shooting," he says. "They trained you how to load a gun, how to put in the bullet and release the trigger for the gun to shoot."

After more than two years, Peter managed to escape his captors. He eventually made his way to Uganda, via the Democratic Republic of Congo. Now 14, he lives in a refugee camp with another family.

"My heart was happy when I arrived in Uganda," he says. "I saw schools and hospitals. I was excited and said, 'This is the place where you can at least study and get medication whenever you are sick.'"

Peter is now going to school and is keen to continue his education. Save the Children is providing psychosocial support to him and other young people at the camp.

PHOTO: LOUIS LEESON / SAVE THE CHILDREN

risks girls face within armed groups – such as forced and/or early marriage, sexual abuse and exploitation, or being forced to carry out domestic work – are different from and less recognised than those faced by boys. As a result, in the data on children's recruitment and use in armed groups, girls are often overlooked.

Gender stereotypes are often evident when boys and girls are recruited and used by armed groups. In Syria, in 2016, 98% of boys recruited by armed actors were deployed in military functions, ranging from frontline fighting to conducting executions to perpetrating suicide attacks.[47] In Yemen, before the escalation of conflict in 2015, there were already reports of boys having adopted combat functions as well as security and logistical roles.[48] In South Sudan, boys living in pastoralist, cattle-raising communities are at particular risk of recruitment due to common expectations that boys – but not girls – will join a militia once they reach puberty.[49]

Girls often fill support functions, such as food preparation and other domestic tasks, in addition to being sexual abused and exploited, sometimes as child brides of fighters.[50] Research in Syria has shown that girls forcibly married in this way were frequently abandoned, divorced or left widowed.[51] Girls were often obliged to accompany their 'husbands' – placing themselves at physical risk due to their proximity to ongoing hostilities.[52]

In some situations, girls are as likely to be used in combat roles as boys. For example, in DRC, research conducted by MONUSCO (the UN mission in the DRC) found that 89% of girls recruited by one armed group were directly involved in hostilities. In the Kasaï region, girls believed to have special powers have been sent to the frontlines as human shields to protect other fighters.

After exit

Children formerly associated with armed forces or armed groups face a multitude of immediate and lifelong challenges. Both girls and boys can suffer from physical, developmental and mental health conditions, and the conditions and recovery will be informed by gender. It is likely that they must overcome age and gender-based barriers in terms of access to health services, including mental health services, and educational or employment opportunities. For example, traditional norms around masculinity will likely affect whether boys access mental health services. The World Health Organization reports that women and girls constitute the largest single group of individuals suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder globally, while also recognising that this analysis is skewed by harmful gender norms that often serve to keep men and boys from seeking mental health and psychosocial support services.[53]

Social reintegration might be difficult as these children have lost their ties to family and community. Stateless children or those originating from other countries face additional challenges, including exclusion from formal release and reintegration processes due to their foreign nationality.

In contrast to boys, girls associated with armed forces or armed groups, who may have been forced into sexual relationships, forced marriage or support roles, run the risk of never being officially released and reintegrated. Young women and girls formerly associated with armed forces or groups who attempt to reintegrate into their communities may face stigma, regardless of whether their role was as a combatant, 'sex slave' or forced bride. A girl's association with an armed group is likely to be perceived by family and community as impure, unnatural – because outside of gender norms – and dishonourable. This is likely to be compounded if the woman or girl has had a child as a result of her association with the armed force or group.

Girls who were formerly associated with armed forces or groups and who have survived this kind of gender-based violence urgently need adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, and gender-responsive psychosocial support to address traumatic experiences. Babies born as a result of wartime rape are rarely accepted by families and communities, and instead seen as 'children of the enemy'.[54] In Iraq, for example, children born by mothers associated with the Islamic State, including women abducted and raped, have been categorised and labelled 'terrorist' on their birth certificates by local authorities.[55]

Boys returning from conflict also risk rejection by their communities of origin. Save the Children assessments in Somalia and Nigeria show that boys fear being killed on returning home. This reflects a stereotypical view of all boys as a threat – a perception that has led to boys' arbitrary detention, especially when there is a real or perceived link to violent extremism (see box page 25).[56]

CHILDREN IN DETENTION

The detention of children and deprivation of their liberty[57] is an escalating trend in most of the countries affected by conflict mentioned in the report. Although not considered one of the grave violations, the MRM mechanism has reported on detentions since 2012.[58] During that time, there has been a threefold increase in verified cases.[59]

In the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on children and armed conflict, there are 2,574 verified cases of children deprived of liberty – 476 girls, 1,592 were boys and 283 not specified. The highest numbers are reported in Iraq, Nigeria and Somalia.[60]

These verified cases of detention are the tip of the iceberg. A recent UN study on the detention of children estimates that at least 35, 000 children are deprived of liberty in the context of conflict, including those detained in child facilities, prisons or camps.[61] Detention significantly increases vulnerability to sexual violence – with boys often the victims, since boys are more frequently detained than girls.[62]

During detention, many children face torture and/or ill treatment. In several countries in conflict, children have died in custody owing to poor conditions or ill treatment.[63]

Among the main reasons for detention is the actual or alleged association of children or their families with armed groups such as Islamic State in Syria or Iraq, Boko Haram in Nigeria or Al-Shabab in Somalia. Armed groups also detain children as punishment, for recruitment purposes, to extract ransom, for sexual abuse and exploitation, or as bargaining chips for prisoner swaps.

As in the case of abduction and recruitment, boys make up the majority of children detained, usually as a result of actual or alleged association with armed groups or national security-related charges. Such detentions are driven by harmful gender norms that portray boys, and adolescent boys in particular, as potentially violent security risks. The UN study on detention of children points out that, while an overwhelming majority of the overall cases relates to boys, girls are more likely to be arrested because of their behaviour (such as sexual activity, truancy and running away from home) rather than criminal activity. In detention, the study notes, girls are particularly vulnerable to sexual and other forms of violence. Children belonging to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) community are more likely to be arrested and detained as a result of their gender identity and are at particular risk of sexual violence in detention.[64]

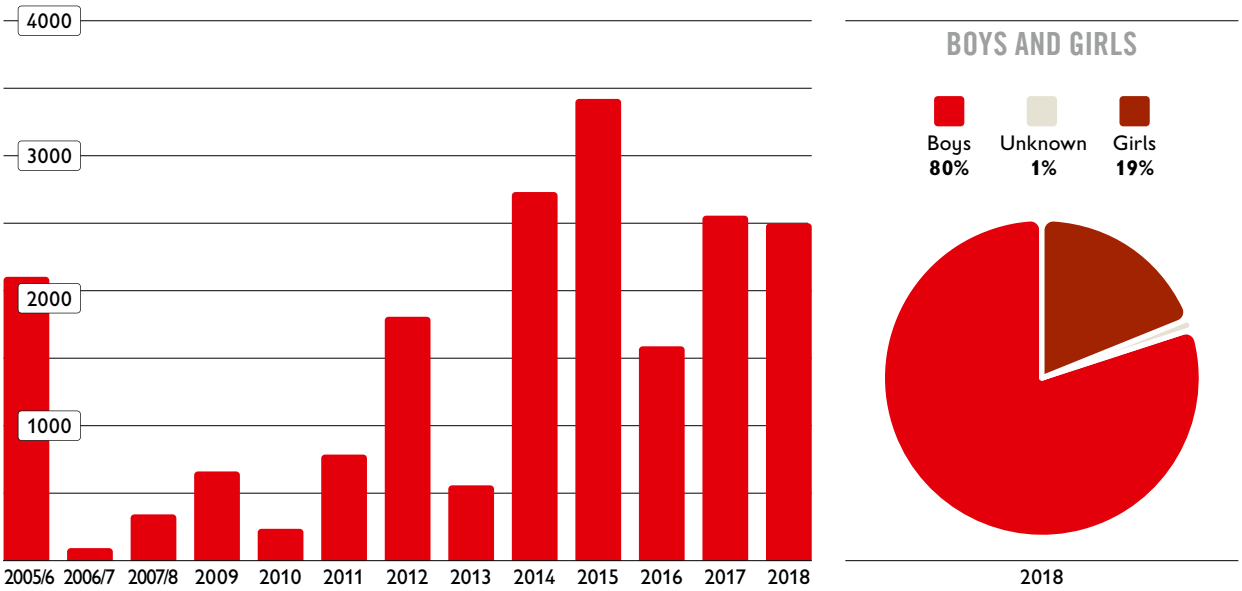
In north-east Syria alone, at least 1,248 children, mainly under the age of five, are deprived of liberty in IDP sites.[65] These children are exposed to high degrees of violence and exploitation, and have limited or no parental care, and often their basic needs, such as food and health care, are not met.

Al Hol Camp, North East Syria.

PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

3

ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN



The abduction[66], enslavement and recruitment of children into armed forces and sexual exploitation is reported across the conflicts covered in the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report, affecting at least 2,500 children. Of these, 1,999 (80%) were boys, 484 (19%) were girls, while the sex was unknown in 17 cases. In Somalia alone, 1,609 children, some as young as eight, were abducted, mainly for the purpose of recruitment.

While the number of abductions slightly decreased in the DRC (367) from the peak of 420 in 2017, many children abducted in previous years remain in captivity and are subjected to sexual exploitation and forced labour.[67] Similar cases are verified in South Sudan, Afghanistan and Mali.

The abduction of girls continues to increase. In February 2018, Boko Haram abducted at least 110 girls from a girls' school in Yobe state, Nigeria. The high-profile abduction of 276 girls from their school in Chibok, northern Nigeria in April 2014 reveals the underlying rationale for these abductions – to curtail girls' access to 'western' schooling.[68] 112 girls are still missing or in captivity.[69] Videos subsequently released by Boko Haram demonstrated the group's intention to punish children for their attendance at such schools,[70] and particularly to punish girls for not adhering to strictly interpreted gender norms.

In this case, abduction represents an attack on education. Since mid-2013, the number of girls abducted in Nigeria has escalated dramatically. Although exact figures are difficult to establish, estimates range anywhere from 2,000 to 8,000 women and girls abducted.[71] Once in captivity, female abductees have been subjected to other violations, such as sexual violence – including rape, forced marriage and recruitment into armed groups.[72] This appears to be part of an overarching strategy to use women and girls, which includes the tactical use of female suicide bombers, which has rise significantly since the Chibok incident in 2014.[73]

The fear alone of abduction can lead families to limit educational opportunities for girls. This is particularly true in contexts where a girl's value is predominantly seen in terms of her reproductive and marital prospects, and/or where family honour is closely tied to girls' sexual purity. As mentioned earlier, adolescent girls, in particular, are often kept isolated or immobile in conflict settings, due to the increased risks they face of gender-based violence. They are 90% more likely to be out of school than their counterparts in stable contexts.[74] In Libya, for example,

FIGURE 8

The number of children abducted by armed forces and armed groups, by year, and sex breakdown in 2018.

SOURCE: VERIFIED CASES FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

"On my way to school, I fear suicide attacks, kidnapping and [I'm afraid] that someone might kill me. There is war in my country. People are killing children; we are not protected. And we don't have proper schools. Lots of people got killed and there is no safe place for people."
—Hemat, 10, Afghanistan[77]

the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights reported that in areas under Ansar al-Sharia control, parents were "afraid to send their daughters to school for fear they would be abducted."[75] These same fears have been echoed across various other contexts. In Afghanistan, the vast majority of respondents to a recent Save the Children survey said children feel least safe on their way to school, in a marketplace or when close to government buildings or checkpoints. They fear explosions, being kidnapped or facing other forms of extreme violence.[76]

While abduction is recognised as a primary form of forced recruitment of children by armed forces and armed groups, it also serves as an entry point for exposure to further grave violations. The drivers behind abduction are often predicated on gendered expectations of what purpose child abductees will later serve.

4

RAPE AND OTHER FORMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN

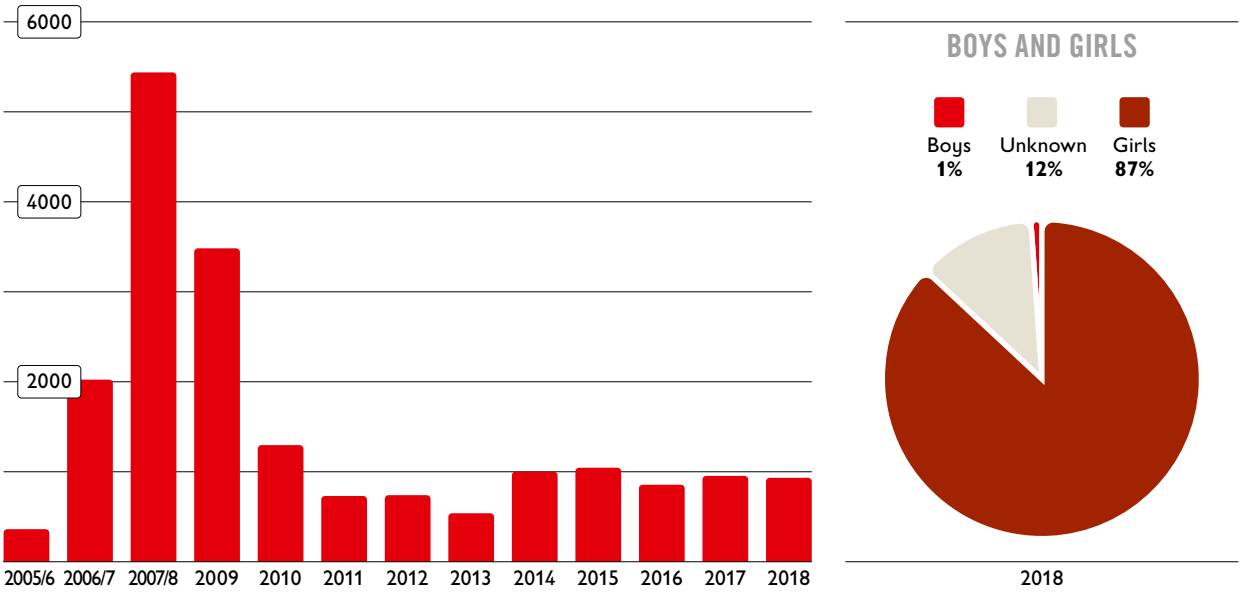


FIGURE 9

Number of children victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence.

SOURCE: VERIFIED CASES FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

Sexual violence occurs everywhere in society. In the private sphere and the public sphere, in the home, in communities, in schools, workplaces, and other institutions. Sexual and gender-based violence has always been common in conflicts, as well as in natural disasters and their aftermath. Children are often the victims, with particularly high risks faced by girls.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence[78] is the only grave violation where the total number of verified cases for girls is higher than that of boys. This reflects global trends, where an overwhelming percentage of survivors of sexual violence are women and girls,[79] but also raises the broader issue of under-reporting, linked to stigma and social barriers – especially, but by no means exclusively, among boys.

For the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on children and armed conflict, the MRM verified 933 cases of sexual violence. Of these, 87% are violations against girls, while only 1% of the verified cases were violations committed against boys. Sexual violence is verified in 12 out of the 20 countries covered, with most cases occurring in Somalia (331 cases, of which 328 were committed against girls and three against boys) and in DRC (277, all girls). The numbers are also high in South Sudan, Sudan and in Central African Republic.

For the first time since 2016, the UN report on children and armed conflict included verified cases of the perpetration of sexual violence against children in Yemen. Unlike other countries in the report, the majority of verified sexual violence incidents were committed against boys, who made up seven out of a total of nine cases.

Rape and other forms of sexual violence can occur in a number of ways – as a weapon of war, for instance, in Myanmar, where the widespread and systematic sexual violence committed by the Tatmadaw was part of a campaign of violence and forced displacement against the Rohingya. It can also overlap with abduction and the recruitment and use of children, where girls and boys may be sexually exploited and abused by armed forces. For example, in Central African Republic in 2018 alone, 14 girls were victims of sexual violence during their association with armed

A VERY DIFFICULT JOURNEY

Sara, 14, was forced to flee the conflict in Burundi without her family. "I fled by myself as my family could only afford transport for one person from our family and my father and mother decided it would be me," she says.

"It was a very difficult journey," says Sara. "A group of us were walking towards the border with Rwanda when we met a group of armed men. They picked some of us from the group and said we needed to give them money. When we didn't have money to give them they took us into the forest."

Sara was raped. As a result of the attack, she became pregnant.

Sara managed to get to a refugee camp in Rwanda. Here, she later gave birth to a healthy baby boy.

Save the Children has supported Sara under its programme for vulnerable children at Mahama refugee camp.

PHOTO: MARK KAYE / SAVE THE CHILDREN

groups.[80] In Libya, migrant children were reportedly subjected to trafficking and sexual exploitation, although the UN was unable to verify any cases.

Sexual violence as a weapon of war

In addition to the increased likelihood of sexual violence in times of instability, sexual violence continues to be used as part of the broader strategy of conflict, with women and girls predominantly targeted and affected.[81] Armed forces and armed groups may target women and girls for sexual violence as a 'reward' for fighters; as a deliberate strategy to dishonour and thus demoralise males by violating their wives and daughters, or in some contexts as a form of ethnic cleansing. Each of these aims plays on gendered norms – for example, the objectification of women and girls as sexual objects and bounties of war – and harmful traditions that tie the honour of the family and community to women and girls' purity.

Conflict-related sexual violence also continues to function as both a driver and a result of forced displacement, often for the same gendered reasons. Sexual violence is used to destabilise communities and expel certain groups in order to regain control of an area, or as a means of repression, terror and control. For instance, in South Sudan, allied militias raped women and girls as part of a campaign to drive opponents out of southern parts of Unity State.[82] The widespread use of sexual violence by armed forces against Rohingya children is documented and verified by the 2017 UN report on children and armed conflict as well as other UN reports from 2018 and 2019, which

I USED TO PLAY AND ENJOY MY TIME

Hurriyah, 12, a Syrian refugee, lives with her family in Lebanon.

"I used to play and enjoy my time," she says. "But I'm not happy anymore. In Syria I had more freedom. Here I can't go outside or even open the door."

Hurriyah and her family fled war. But now Hurriyah faces a new threat: child marriage.

"I want to continue my studies," says Hurriyah. "I don't want to get married, but my father is saying I might have to leave school."

Hurriyah was harassed on the way to and from school. Her father is now considering arranging for her to be married. As refugees, he doesn't feel the family can call on the police to protect Hurriyah from harassment. He thinks early marriage might be the only way to keep her safe and defend her reputation. Hurriyah's mother, Noor, on the other hand, is strongly opposed.

Noor is also worried about Hurriyah's mental health. "Hurriyah can't go out and she is locked in her room all day long," says Noor. "She has started to have psychological issues – she has bad headaches and fears. Sometimes, she tells me she wants to commit suicide."

Noor says, "The war is having a big impact on early marriage." She has taken part in sessions run by Save the Children to raise awareness of the issues around child marriage in order to help prevent it.

PHOTO: NOUR WAHID / SAVE THE CHILDREN

stress that "rape and other sexual violence have been particularly egregious and recurrent" and directed against girls and boys, women and men.[83]

Sexual violence has been used as a tactic in conflict to displace populations, gain information through interrogation, advance extremist ideology, and destabilise social structures. The UN Secretary-General's report on sexual violence in conflict points at how women heads of households or women migrating with children are particularly vulnerable to sexual violence by representatives of the authorities, armed groups, smugglers or traffickers. Sexual violence can play a big role in the political economy of terrorism, with terrorist groups generating revenue from abducting and commodifying women and girls through physical and online slave markets and through human trafficking.[84] Girl heads of household or unaccompanied and separated girls on the move face similar vulnerabilities which are exacerbated due to their age and gender-related power differentials.

Sexual violence is both a driver and result of child, early and forced marriage. Girls who become pregnant are exposed to a number of additional risks, and 90% of births to adolescent girls occur within a child marriage.[85]

Girls affected by conflict also have limited opportunities to avoid unwanted pregnancies. At the same time, access to antenatal care, assisted childbirth and emergency obstetric care is inadequate. Complications during pregnancy and childbirth remain the leading cause of death globally for adolescent girls aged 15–19.[86] Girls under 15 are five times more likely to die due to pregnancy- or childbirth-related complications than women over 19.[87] According to the *United Nations Population Fund's State of the World's Population 2019*, more than 500 women and girls die every day in emergency contexts due to lack of skilled birth attendants, emergency obstetrics and unsafe abortions.[88]

According to a recent report by UNICEF, 765 million children and adults worldwide were married as children.[89] Girls and women are disproportionately affected, with one in five young women now in their early twenties already married before they turned 18, compared with one in 30 young men.[90] An estimated 12 million more girls are married each year.[91] A growing body of research shows that child, early and forced marriage often increases with conflict and has both immediate and long-lasting effects.[92] Nine of the 10 countries with the highest prevalence rate of child, early and forced marriage are classified as fragile or conflict affected.[93] Yet, despite the evidence showing an increased risk of child marriage in conflict, there remain significant gaps in data on the incidence and prevalence of child, early and forced marriage.[94]

The UN Secretary-General's reports on children and armed conflict and the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) focus only on violations perpetrated by parties to a conflict. Thus, although the MRM should cover data collection on girls forcibly married to armed actors, other child marriages are outside its mandate and are not captured. Other data collection tools designed to measure child marriage prevalence and incidence rates are rarely used outside of stable contexts. Child marriage is a particularly compelling example of a 'secondary harm' experienced by girls in conflict-settings that is not comprehensively addressed by existing policy and accountability frameworks under international law.

While some impacts of sexual violence are specific to girls, such as obstetric fistula and the risks associated with unsafe abortions, other consequences can be debilitating for both girls and boys. These include psychological trauma, urinary and anal incontinence, loss of sexual pleasure, and exposure to HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.[95] In addition, survivors often live with stigma and distress for many years if not the rest of their lives. Boys who suffer sexual violence may feel emasculated; girls may perceive themselves or be perceived to be dishonoured, impure or unmarriable. Babies conceived through conflict-related sexual violence may be rejected by their communities.

A survey conducted in 2015 in South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, asked women about their lives as mothers of children conceived through sexual violence.[96] Two-thirds reported they often see their assailant and/or remember the assault when looking at their children; spousal acceptance of the child was even lower than acceptance by their community or family. The study found a critical need for interventions to reduce stigma in order to prevent

"Sexually abused children are marked both physically and psychologically. They are vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases and to drug consumption, in order to forget the abuse they endure."—Aboubacar, Youth Ambassador, Mali[103]

pervasive and long-term negative impact for the mother and child. Stigma-reduction efforts require multi-level and multi-sectoral responses – including the support and leadership of community and religious leaders. In a study conducted in 2019 with individuals born after genocide-related rapes in Rwanda, participants noted being treated differently from siblings, and facing neglect and abuse at home. For many, poverty added to the psychological and social challenges.[97]

Sexual violence against boys

Sexual and gender-based violations are significantly under-reported due to the associated stigma; and among boys and men who have suffered sexual violence, under-reporting is widely understood to be proportionally even greater. The descriptions that come to light reinforce the message that sexual violence is not about sex, but about power, humiliation and destruction. For example, it includes being forced to watch acts of sexual violence on others and being forced to perform sexual acts on another person – including a member of a boy or man's family or on a dead body. Other manifestations include "castration, sterilisation, genital shocks and beatings, forced masturbation of self and others, insertion of objects into the urethra, oral and anal rape with objects such as rifles, sticks or broken bottles."[98] There are also reported cases of older boys committing sexual violence against younger boys within conflict settings.[99]

A report on sexual violence against men and boys in the Syria crisis published by UNHCR in 2017 finds that boys in Syria are subject to widespread sexual violence. This includes sexual torture by multiple parties to conflict. Official and makeshift detention centres were reported as key sites of sexual violence.[100]

As with girls, male survivors can suffer from a wide range of consequences. Physical injuries and conditions can include anal fissures, genital mutilation, and testicular, penile or rectal pain. Psychological impacts include "shame, loss of confidence, sleep disorders, feelings of powerlessness, confusion and suicidal thoughts".[101] Other consequences include social exclusion, stigmatisation and problems reintegrating into their family. The pervasiveness and power of culturally prescribed norms around masculinity, male sexuality and the male protective role should not be under-estimated. These notions underlie some male survivors' "feelings of emasculation and self-blame" and fears and anxieties about being perceived as homosexual.[102]

VIOLENCE AGAINST PEOPLE WHO ARE LGBTI

The Independent International Commission of Inquiry confirms reports from human rights campaigners that atrocities have been perpetrated in Syria against people who are or are perceived to be Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex (LGBTI), including "torture, stoning, beheading, and burning people alive."[104]

UNHCR's global review of efforts to protect LGBTI asylum-seekers and refugees reported that parties to conflict can "disproportionately subject LGBTI persons to discrimination, homicide, torture, displacement, sexual violence, amongst other… violations."[105] Such discrimination has also taken the form of "anti-gay pamphleteering, beating and murdering LGBTI protestors and their defenders…[and] sexual exploitation of transgender individuals."[106]

SAMIRA: SEPARATED FROM HER CHILD

Samira is a 15-year-old Yezidi girl from Iraq and the mother of a two-year old child. In 2016, she was kidnapped with her mother and sisters in Sinjar Province in Iraq. She was kept in captivity and sold to at least three people who beat and sexually assaulted her, before being forced into marriage with an ISIS combatant and giving birth to a child. Her husband was killed in coalition bombing and Samira fled with her child to Mabrouka Camp in north-east Syria. In the camp, Save the Children supported her to access health and education services, psychosocial support and parenting advice. Authorities in north-east Syria relocated her from the camp to a Yezidi home. She was separated from her child and returned to Sinjar. The child remains under the care of the authorities in Syria. Samira said, "I would prefer to stay in slavery and live in camps my whole life rather than leave my child. I did not want to leave her to live without mother, or to live the life that I lived. I wanted to give her the rights that I have been denied as a child."

"As children, we do not accept the idea of child marriage. I think that many grown-ups believe in child marriage. After many attempts to change their views, some have been convinced. Their mindsets have changed. Adults have taught us so many things. Any man can teach his daughter what to do and what not to do. And at some point, it will be his turn to listen to me and learn from me, because I have so much to teach you," says Hiba, age 17, from Syria and now living in Jordan.

PHOTO: JORDI MATAS / SAVE THE CHILDREN

5

ATTACKS ON SCHOOLS AND HOSPITALS

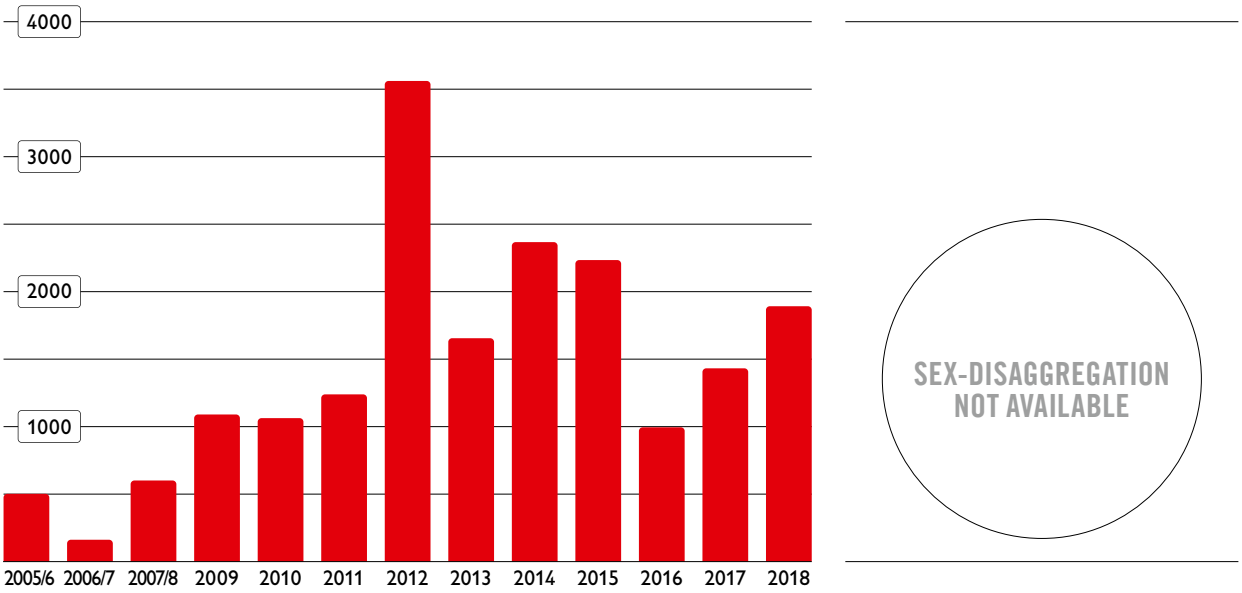


FIGURE 10

Number of attacks on schools and hospitals.

SOURCE: VERIFIED INCIDENTS AND CASES FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

"Where I'm from, parents are scared to send their children to school."

Purity, Youth Ambassador, Nigeria, age 14[107]

The number of attacks on schools and hospitals[108] increased in 2018, with total of 1,892[109] verified incidents of attack and military use of schools and hospitals in 18 countries. This is an increase of as much as 32% compared to 2017. In addition, the report points to reported, but not verified, incidents in Pakistan (34) and Thailand (1).

A total of 730 incidents of attacks on schools and education personnel and 887 incidents of attacks on hospitals and medical personnel are verified in the UN Secretary-General's 2019 report on children and armed conflict. In addition, 142 schools and 17 hospitals were used for military purposes. The report shows an overall increase in attacks in Afghanistan, Colombia, Central African Republic, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Mali, occupied Palestinian territory and Libya. Data on verified attacks on schools and hospitals is not sex-disaggregated because it documents attacks on buildings and physical structures – so-called collective violations. However, evidence points to the specific targeting of girls' education. In Afghanistan, for instance, the number of attacks on schools has increased dramatically, with girls' schools repeatedly targeted. In June 2018, more than 80 girls' schools were closed after Islamic State militants in eastern Afghanistan threatened to bomb them.[110]

Attacks on girls' schools are often a direct attack on girls who step outside of restrictive gender norms and expectations. In some cases, violent extremist groups have clearly stated their rationale for attacking girls' schools – for example, to warn girls not to go to school, demand that teachers and parents close girls' schools, or to try to restrict mobility and dress codes for women teachers and girls attending schools.[111] Some of these attacks have been driven by entrenched and regressive norms around gender and girls' roles and value. In such settings, a common perception may be that girls' value derives solely from their marital and reproductive capacities or care-taking roles, and that their behaviour and presence should be confined to the private sphere.[112]

Positively, the global reporting of incidents of armed parties using schools for military purposes continues to decrease, down 25% from 188 schools

THE GLOBAL COALITION FOR THE PROTECTION OF EDUCATION FROM ATTACK

From the launch of the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015 until 2018, the Global Coalition for the Protection of Education from Attack (GPCEA) reported that, in the 12 countries that endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration in 2015, incidents of military use of schools and universities declined.[117] By end of 2019 the number of endorsements of the Safe Schools Declaration by states reached 101, with Ukraine and Seychelles becoming the 100th and 101st states committing to keep schools safe.

Since the Safe Schools Declaration launch, Save the Children's Safe Schools programme has helped to keep children safe from all hazards in and around school, and supported governments to put their commitments into practice.

In Ukraine, where more than 750 educational facilities have been damaged since the beginning of the conflict in 2014,[118] many children fear attending school and are distressed by the presence of armed soldiers in and around their schools. According to Save the Children's gender assessment in 2019, based on consultations with 107 children living in government-controlled areas near the contact line, boys fear being beaten by soldiers and girls report sexual harassment by the military.[119]

"The military catcall and harass us. We are scared and run from them when we see them. Military people stop the car close to girls at the street, talking to them and trying to touch them. Parents do not let us leave the house in the evening."

"Military men are always drunk. Nobody can tell what they are up to and they spend time near the school. They think they can do anything."

— Comments at a focus group with girls aged 14–17, Ukraine.

in 2017 to 142 schools in 2018. Of these 142 schools, over 90% are found in four countries: Iraq (48), Yemen (32), Syria (24) and South Sudan (26). In Syria, Iraq and Somalia, schools and children's journeys to and from school have been reported to be sites of recruitment – of boys, in particular.[113]

As the data on incidents of attacks on schools and hospitals are collective violations, it is difficult to draw any definite conclusions based on gender analyses. Despite this, it is possible to suggest some differences in the experience of attacks on schools and hospitals across genders. Countries affected by conflict tend to have wider gender gaps in enrolment than elsewhere.[114] And girls overall are 2.5 times more likely to be out of school in conflict settings than boys.[115] This could lead to a greater number of boys experiencing attacks on schools than girls but is highly context dependent, given the deliberate targeting by some groups of girls' education. And when girls are not in school, they are more likely to be married as children, experience early pregnancy, and face life-long gender-based violence and health issues.[116]

6

DENIAL OF HUMANITARIAN ACCESS TO CHILDREN

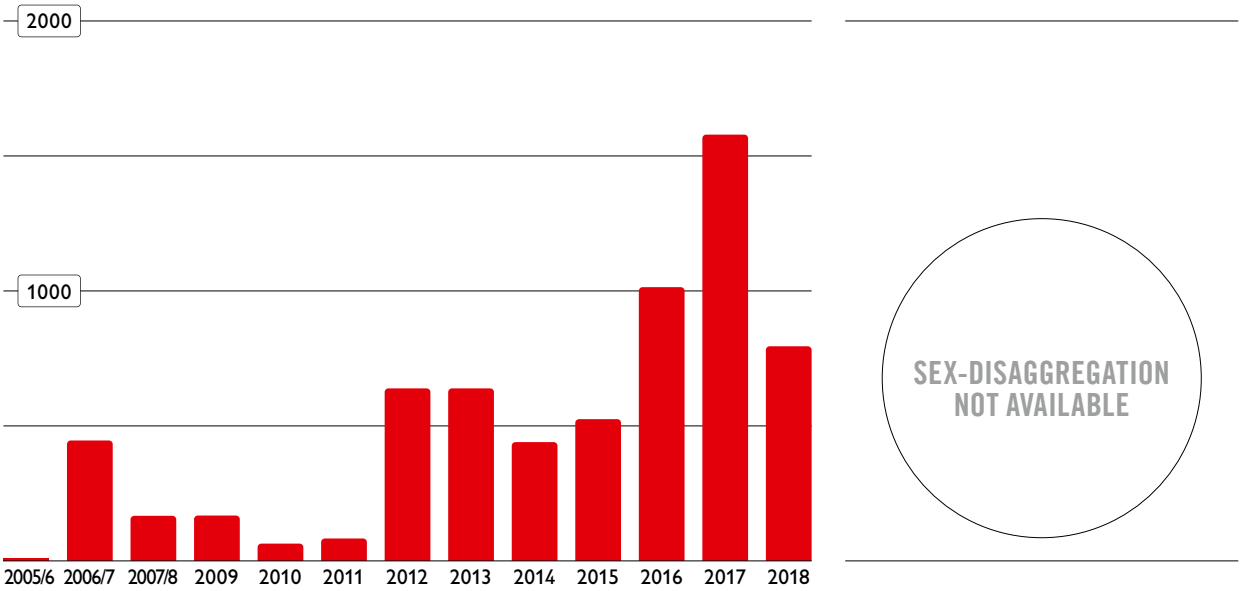


FIGURE 11

Number of incidents of denial of humanitarian access.

SOURCE: VERIFIED INCIDENTS FROM THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL'S ANNUAL REPORTS ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT. THE ACTUAL NUMBERS ARE LIKELY TO BE HIGHER.

While the number of verified incidents of denial of humanitarian access[120] fell from 1,579 incidents in 2017 to 795 in 2018, the UN Secretary-General's report on children and armed conflict asserts that "the decrease could be explained by restricted access to information, rather than an improvement of the situation."[121] The restraint of, threats against, and targeting of humanitarian personnel and civilian infrastructure has prevented humanitarian actors from gaining information. The report on children and armed conflict includes the verification of 128 killed or wounded aid workers, as well as 116 aid workers abducted or detained, in Afghanistan, Central African Republic and Syria.

In Iraq, for example, there were no verified incidents of the denial of humanitarian access, however bureaucratic processes have made it difficult for humanitarian workers to reach those in need with help.[122] In addition, families and children with actual or alleged affiliation with Islamic State continue to be prevented from accessing basic services such as healthcare.[123] The same applies in Syria, where the restriction of movement and access to basic health services has caused the death of several children in Rukban.[124]

With at least 275 incidents, Yemen continues to rank highly for the prevalence of denial of humanitarian assistance to children affected by conflict. Other high numbers of incidents were documented in Mali and the Central African Republic. There was a sharp increase in the number of incidents verified in Nigeria (from 5 in 2017 to 33 in 2018).

Similarly to attacks on schools and hospitals, the data on incidents of denial of humanitarian access mostly concerns collective violations. Almost none of the data on denial of humanitarian access was disaggregated by sex in either the 2018 or 2019 reports on children and armed conflict.[125] It is therefore difficult to draw any substantive definitive gendered conclusions.

However, analysis suggests that it is possible that girls suffer more severely from the denial of humanitarian access. This is due to cultural and social restrictions on girls' movements, which exacerbate their dependency on adult and/or male counterparts, and further limit their access to essential aid and services.[126] More research is needed to understand the scale and scope of this violation as it pertains to gender and age.

BRIDGING THE FUNDING GAP

There are many effective child protection interventions in conflict situations. These include:

- case management for children who have suffered or are at risk of serious violence or exploitation;
- family tracing and reunification, and the provision of alternative care for unaccompanied and separated children, and
- the release and reintegration of children associated with armed forces and armed groups.

However, the scale of these interventions is limited in humanitarian responses, and often they come too late, if at all.

Although funding for child protection has increased since 2010, it remains very limited, making up an average of 0.53% of total humanitarian funding between 2010 and 2018. The gap in funding for child protection is even more stark when considering how many children are in need of protection. Findings suggest that in 2018, an average of only US$3 was spent per year on each child in need of protection.[127]

When it comes to child protection in needs assessments and response strategies, there is significant room for improvement. Only 8% of Humanitarian Response Plans had a dedicated chapter on child protection in 2018, yet 21% of humanitarian needs overviews included a sub-chapter on child protection.[128] Furthermore, child protection assessments and response plans are rarely gender-mainstreamed, leaving gender-related drivers and impacts ignored, and often resulting in gender-blind interventions that fail to adequately address girls' and boys' distinct needs.

Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) against children in conflict is a violation that must be better addressed. Boy and girl survivors of SGBV often fall between two inter-agency coordination mechanisms within the protection cluster – the GBV area of responsibility and the child protection area of responsibility. It is crucial that the two areas of responsibility continue to build on the positive collaboration established to ensure that child survivors receive child-focused, gender-sensitive, specialist support to both prevent and respond to SGBV.

Funding for SGBV interventions for children represents on average a mere 0.12% of total global humanitarian aid per year (annual average for 2010–18) (see Figure 13). Given the magnitude of SGBV in humanitarian contexts and the children, in particular girls, who are at risk of exposure to child, early and forced marriage, more funds are urgently needed to adequately prevent and respond to the needs of child survivors.

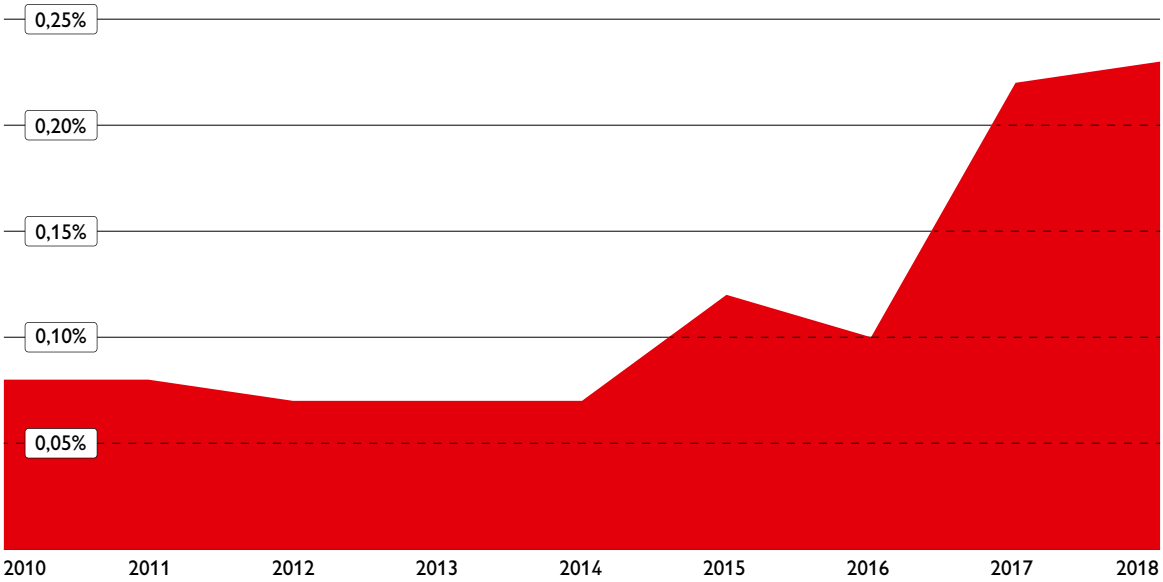


FIGURE 12: FUNDING FOR SGBV INTERVENTIONS FOR CHILDREN AS A PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL HUMANITARIAN AID, BY YEAR[129]

SOURCE: THE ALLIANCE FOR CHILD PROTECTION IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION, SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL & CHILD PROTECTION AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY (2019) *UNPROTECTED: CRISIS IN HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR CHILD PROTECTION*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Lama lives in a displacement camp, North East Syria.
PHOTO: SAVE THE CHILDREN

"Children are more at risk of harm now than at any point since records began."

Our analysis shows that children are disproportionately suffering in modern conflict. While the number of children living in conflict reduced in 2018 from an all-time high in 2017, the number of verified violations increased yet again. Children are more at risk of harm now than at any point since records began.

This report reflects the scale of the challenge facing states and their partners. However, the overarching statistics mask the multifaceted ways in which age, gender and disability affect children's vulnerability to different grave violations, as well as shaping their wider experience of conflict for children. Beneath such surface-level statistics such as the fact that boys are more likely to be abducted, killed or maimed, and recruited and used by armed forces or armed groups, or the fact that girls are more likely to experience sexual violence, there are wide-ranging and often mutually reinforcing effects of conflict that current mandates fail to capture. This includes for instance, access to education and protection, violations facing children affected by forced displacement, access to health and nutrition, and the use of negative coping mechanisms, such as child marriage. Conflict exacerbates underlying gender norms, vulnerabilities and gender biases, and therefore requires responses that address the different protection risks for girls, boys and children of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.

In order to protect children and respond to their needs in conflict settings we need to ensure that gender and age are effectively taken into account – from the way we monitor and report violations, to how we respond programmatically, to the norms and standards we set and enforce. The dynamics around age, in particular, highlight the constant need to protect the right to childhood from the negative impact of modern conflict. It is only through engaging with children that we will achieve the changes that are needed. The lack of children's participation in conflict prevention, in humanitarian response, in development and in peace-building – in addition to under-funding in critical areas – are major barriers to the best possible response to children impacted by conflict.

As set out in Save the Children's previous 'Stop the War on Children' reports, we believe states can stop the war on children by taking concrete action in three areas. These are:

- upholding international norms and standards;
- holding perpetrators of violations against children to account, and
- enabling children to recover from conflict and taking practical action to protect them from harm

In 2019 we saw some progress against these three pillars; however, many of our recommendations still require action.

We also call on states and humanitarian actors to respond to the issues raised in this report regarding the gendered impact of conflict on children.

In addition to our existing roadmap to stop the war on children, we call on:

- States to abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, including the full implementation of such mandates as the Children and Armed Conflict, and Women, Peace and Security Agendas, the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. [130]
- UN Security Council members and other humanitarian actors to implement a holistic approach to addressing sexual and gender-based violence, in fragile, conflict-affected and post-conflict settings, including access to sexual and reproductive health

services, and tailored prevention strategies, such as through efforts to identify, challenge and address discriminatory attitudes and norms at all levels that accept, excuse and drive gender-based violence.

- Donors and humanitarian actors to:
  - increase multi-year investment in humanitarian child protection with the aim of growing its proportion of total humanitarian funding from 0.5% to 4%, including substantially increasing funding for both mainstreamed and targeted interventions on gender equality, girls' empowerment, and sexual and gender-based violence in humanitarian settings. Funding must be secured for both gender- and child protection advisors.
  - increase funding to the MRM to strengthen capacity to monitor and verify violations, disaggregated by age and sex.
  - require full adherence to the Minimum Standards for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies and the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action[131] as a funding condition.[132]
- The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Children and armed Conflict, with financial and diplomatic support made available by states, ensure that data collection through the MRM is sex-disaggregated whenever possible, and to work with parties to conflict to develop action plans that specifically address the ways in which all the grave violations differentially target girls, boys and children of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities.
- Humanitarian actors to support children to raise complaints of violations of their rights in conflict directly – through sustainable funding, institutionalised mechanisms, and age and gender-sensitive capacity- and skills-building, in spaces that include:
  - local, national, and regional accountability mechanisms and processes;
  - the complaints procedure of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child;
  - UN human rights accountability mechanisms, including the Universal Periodic Review and Convention on the Rights of the Child, and by committing to sign and ratify the third Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which enables children to hold parties to the UNCRC to account for failing to uphold their rights;
  - accountability processes for the Sustainable Development Goals, such as the voluntary national reviews, and
  - the ongoing Beijing +25 review process, leading to a five-year plan for increasing progress on girls' rights.
- All actors to ensure meaningful participation for children in humanitarian response, peace-building and development by:
  - ensuring that all humanitarian responses are informed by child consultations as a way to develop inclusive, age-, gender- and disability-sensitive and transformative responses;
  - strengthening child participation as part of the children and armed conflict agenda by implementing and resourcing the participation commitment in resolution 2427, and
  - systematically supporting the inclusion of children in peace-making and peace-building efforts.
- All actors on the ground in humanitarian settings must consistently collect, analyse, and use data disaggregated by sex, age, and disability and to the greatest extent possible, recognising the direct impact this has on design and delivery of programmes and advocacy for children in conflict. Specific focus should be given within initiatives of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on joint integrated analysis to work across sectors to address data gaps on child marriage in humanitarian settings.

For a full list of recommendations, please see the *Stop the War on Children 2019 report*.[133]

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: METHODOLOGY

The findings in this report are based on three main sources:

- Updated data on the number of children living in conflict zones conducted by the Peace Research Institute (PRIO), Oslo. The core dataset used to map conflict patterns in this report is the Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Georeferenced Event Dataset (UCDP GED). The UCDP dataset provides the geographical location, timing and intensity of each conflict event globally, covering the years 1989–2018. To estimate the number of children living in conflict areas, and populations more generally, PRIO cross-referenced the conflict data with population data from Gridded Population of the World (GPW) and from the UN (2018).
- Analysis by Save the Children of the 2019 United Nations Annual Report of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict. The analysis also draws on previous Save the Children mapping of the number of grave violations in the reports on children and armed conflict from 2005–17.
- A Proteknon consulting group study commissioned by Save the Children[134], which examines more deeply the gender dimensions of the six grave violations committed against children in conflict-affected areas, informed the gender analysis of the six grave violations.

APPENDIX 2: DATA LIMITATIONS

The MRM[135] data in the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict inevitably only paints a partial picture due to access restrictions, security threats and limited resources, which means not all cases can be reported or verified and are therefore not included in the report. Although the numbers on verified violations are likely to only be the tip of the iceberg, the trends are measurable and reflect the reality that we see in conflict zones today.

There remains a significant and worrying gap in child-specific and sex-disaggregated data in conflicts. For example, there is currently no comprehensive, reliable data on child casualties in conflicts around the world. Authoritative sources of conflict and fatality data, such as the Uppsala Conflict Data Programme and the Armed Conflict and Events Data project, do not provide any information on the age distribution of those killed in conflict.

The absence of systematic sex and age disaggregated data makes it difficult to provide comprehensive gender analysis. Extensive primary research at country level would have been necessary to fully address these gaps in data.

In addition, to a broader gap in sex and age disaggregated data, there is also a significant gap in data on incidence and prevalence rates for specific violations more likely to be experienced in the private rather than public sphere, and thus more likely to

be experienced by girls. Specific and ongoing gaps in data on child marriage in humanitarian contexts, and particularly in conflict contexts, is one such example that neither the protection agendas under the Security Council's mandate nor data collection efforts under the international humanitarian architecture have been able to address.[136]

For data on children of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity and expression (SOGIE), there is an almost complete absence of formal research, programming or documentation in relation to all the grave violations. Where obtaining sex-disaggregated data per violation is challenging, obtaining data on children of diverse SOGIE is even more so.

However, this report does provide an overarching gender analysis of the available data sets, policies and practices, while also highlighting any gaps. It serves as a point of departure for the formulation of recommendations and advocacy for field practitioners, donors and the wider humanitarian community.

APPENDIX 3: DEFINITIONS USED IN THIS REPORT

This report uses the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) definitions of conflict. The UCDP is the world's foremost provider of data on organised violence, and its Georeferenced Event Dataset and other datasets inform this research.

Conflict/armed conflict: when armed force is used by an organized actor against another organised actor or against civilians, resulting in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year (low-intensity conflict). Medium intensity is defined as 25–999 battle deaths, and high intensity defined as 1,000 or more battle-related deaths in a country-year.

The definition includes three types of conflict:
- State-based conflict takes place between two states (inter-state conflict), or between one state and one or more rebel groups (civil conflict).
- Non-state conflict is fought between two organised, armed actors, of which neither is the government of a state.
- One-sided violence is perpetrated by an organised armed group, either a state's military forces or an armed group, against civilians.

Conflict incidents/events: a conflict event is defined as a lethal incident, either a violent clash between two armed groups or an attack on civilians by a group/groups, at a given time and place. Conflicts usually consist of multiple conflict events.

Conflict zone/area (or an area impacted by conflict): an area within the borders of a country and within 50km from where one or more conflict incidents takes place in a given year.

Battle-related deaths: the use of armed force between warring parties in a conflict, be it state-based or non-state, resulting in deaths. We use the term to include both combatant and civilian deaths, unless otherwise specified.

Children living in conflict-affected areas/ conflict-affected children: children who reside within conflict zones.

Children: we use the definition from the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which defines children as individuals under the age of 18 years.

Gender: the socially constructed roles, behaviours, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for a person, often based on their sex.

Gender equality: the absence of discrimination on the basis of sex or gender. For Save the Children, gender equality is when one sex or gender is not routinely privileged or prioritised over another and all people are recognised, respected and valued for their capacities and potential as individuals and members of society. Further, gender equality is when all people – girls, boys, women and men – have equal rights, obligations and opportunities to: security and good health; a viable livelihood and dignified work; participate in the care of home and dependent family members; take an active part in public and political life; learn and participate in relevant education; and live a life free from violence.

Gender expression: external manifestations of gender, expressed through one's name, pronouns, clothing, haircut, behaviour, voice or body characteristics. Society identifies these cues as masculine and feminine, although what is considered masculine and feminine changes over time and varies by culture. Typically, transgender people seek to make their gender expression align with their gender identity rather than the sex they were assigned at birth.

Gender identity: each person's deeply felt internal and individual experience of gender, which may or may not correspond with their sex assigned at birth. There are many diverse gender identities that do not fit into the categories of women, men, girls and

boys, and that are experienced by adults and children around the world. A non-binary gender identity refers to any gender identity or expression that does not fit the male/female or boy/girl binary.

Gender roles: behaviours, attitudes and actions that society feels are appropriate or inappropriate for a man or woman, boy or girl, according to cultural norms and traditions. Gender roles are neither static nor universal but vary between cultures, over time, between generations and in relation to other social identities, such as social class, socio-economic status, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, ability and health status. Gender roles and equality may also shift with processes of urbanisation or industrialisation, and the fluid nature of gender roles requires careful and ongoing gender analysis.

Gender-sensitive: when the different needs, abilities and opportunities of boys and girls, men and women, and individuals of diverse gender identities are identified, considered and accounted for.[137]

Sexual and gender-based violence/gender-based violence: gender-based violence is a general term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between males and females. The composite term sexual and gender-based violence is used by UNHCR and emphasise that power differentials between adults and children, as well as those between women, men, girls and boys, can be drivers of sexual violence. [138]

The six grave violations against children: the UN Security Council has identified six grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict: killing and maiming of children; recruitment or use of children in armed forces and groups; rape and other forms of sexual violence against children; abduction of children; attacks against schools and hospitals; and denial of humanitarian access to children. These grave violations were defined on the basis of their egregious nature and their severe impact on children's wellbeing. In addition to the six violations, the annual report has verified incidents of detention of children since 2012.

APPENDIX 4: LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DRC: Democratic Republic of Congo

CRPD: Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GCPEA: Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack

GPW: Gridded Population of the World

HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus

ICC: International Criminal Court

IHL: International Humanitarian Law

LGBTI: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender or Intersex

MONUSCO: The United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

MRM: Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism on grave violations against children in conflict

PRIO: Peace Research Institute Oslo

SOGIE: Sexual orientation, gender identity and expression

SGBV: Sex and Gender-Based Violence

STIs: Sexually Transmitted Infections

SVAC: Sexual Violence in Armed Conflict

UCDP GED: Uppsala Conflict Data Program's Georeferenced Event Dataset

UN: United Nations

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNCRC: United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

ENDNOTES

1 When looking at number of children living in conflict zones, the total under-eighteen population is considered, which means that the sex disaggregation is bound to be around 50/50.

2 Since 1990, the global child population has increased by 12%, while the number of children living in conflict zones has increased by 66%.

3 PRIO, Østby, Gudrun; Siri Aas Rustad & Andreas Forø Tollefsen (2020) 'Children Affected by Armed Conflict 1990–2018' in Conflict Trends 1 2020. These numbers are prepared for Save the Children by the Peace Research Institute in Oslo (PRIO). Data sources used to create graph: Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP) Georeferenced Event Dataset (GED) (Sundberg and Melander, 2013; Högbladh, 2019); Gridded Population of the World (GPW) v4 (Center for International Earth Science Information Network, 2016); and World Population Prospects (UN, 2017),

4 See endnote 3

5 UN Secretary-General (2019) 'Secretary-General Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict', https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/509&Lang=E&Area=UNDOC

6 This will differ from the countries with the highest number of children living in conflict zones, as the assessments also takes three other factors into consideration, outlined in the text to follow.

7 Save the Children (2019) 'Stop the War on Children' https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/14409/pdf/report_stop_the_war_on_children.pdf

8 Save the Children (2019) 'Every child in Afghanistan born into war' https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/news/media-centre/press-releases/Every-child-in-Afghanistan-born-into-war

9 UNICEF (2018) 'Half of Syria's children have grown up only seeing violence as conflict nears eight-year mark', https://reliefweb.int/report/syrian-arab-republic/half-syria-s-children-have-grown-only-seeing-violence-conflict-nears

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Eglantyne Jebb said
'The only international language
in the world is a child's cry.'
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and it will not go unanswered.

The war on children must stop.

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