

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

Burkina Faso

209. The United Nations verified 171 grave violations against 83 children (45 boys, 37 girls, 1 sex unknown). Most violations occurred in the East (62), Central North (52) and Sahel (36) regions.

210. Four children, all boys, were recruited and used by unidentified perpetrators in the Sahel region.

211. Ten boys, including nationals of Mali, the Niger and Nigeria (1 each), have been detained in Ouagadougou since 2018 for alleged association with armed groups. One boy associated with an armed group was released and placed in a transit centre.

212. The United Nations verified the killing (24) and maiming (30) of 54 children (27 boys, 26 girls, 1 sex unknown) attributed to JNIM (29), unidentified perpetrators (17), ISGS (5), the Defence and Security Forces (2) and Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie (1). Child casualties resulted from gunshots (33), including 22 during crossfire between the Defence and Security Forces and armed groups, and improvised explosive devices (15).

213. Rape and other forms of sexual violence affecting three girls were verified and attributed to JNIM (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1).

214. A total of 80 attacks on schools (70) and hospitals (10) were verified and attributed to unidentified perpetrators (30), ISGS (44) and JNIM (6).

215. A total of 22 children (14 boys, 8 girls) were abducted for unknown purposes by unidentified perpetrators (16), JNIM and ISGS (3 each). Twenty of the children were released.

216. The United Nations verified eight incidents of denial of humanitarian access attributed to unidentified perpetrators (4), JNIM (3) and ISGS (1).

Developments and concerns

217. I welcome the development of a handover protocol between the Government and the United Nations for the transfer of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors, and I call upon the Government to endorse and implement it, in cooperation with the United Nations, and to release all children from detention. I also call upon the national authorities to treat these children primarily as victims and to uphold international juvenile justice standards.

218. I am alarmed at the elevated number of attacks and threats of attacks against schools and hospitals and protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals by armed groups. I call upon the parties to conflict to end such attacks.

219. I am concerned by the killing and maiming of children. I urge all parties not to target children and to minimize the effect of their operations on children. I call upon all parties to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent violations. I urge the Government to ensure that perpetrators of grave violations against children are held accountable.

Cameroon

220. The United Nations verified 285 grave violations against 232 children (118 boys, 92 girls, 22 sex unknown), in the Far North (161), North-West (83) and South-West (41) Regions.

221. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 15 children (10 boys, 5 girls) in the Far North by Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups (15), including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (3) and unidentified affiliated or splinter groups (12). Eight boys were used in hostilities and seven children as carriers of improvised explosive devices.

222. A total of 16 boys were detained by security forces on national security-related charges in the South-West (11), North-West (3), West (1) and Far North (1) Regions. The United Nations could not establish their status as at December 2020.

223. A total of 165 children (87 boys, 66 girls, 12 sex unknown) were killed (77) and maimed (88) by Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups (97), including JAS (37) and unidentified affiliated or splinter groups (60); unidentified armed groups in the North-West (3); unidentified perpetrators (50) (including 5 during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces); and the Cameroon Armed Forces (15). Casualties occurred in the Far North (97), South-West (35) and North-West (33) Regions and resulted from gunshots, suicide attacks and explosive remnants of war.

224. The attempted rape of one girl by unidentified perpetrators was verified in the North-West Region.

225. A total of 26 attacks on schools (20) and hospitals (6) were verified in the North-West (18), South-West (4) and Far North (4) Regions and were attributed to unidentified perpetrators (22) (including 1 that occurred during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces) and to Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups (4), including JAS (2) and unidentified affiliated or splinter groups (2).

226. The United Nations verified 19 incidents of military use of schools attributed to the Cameroon Armed Forces in the Far North. Schools continued to be used as at December 2020.

227. The United Nations verified the abduction of 68 children (32 boys, 26 girls, 10 sex unknown) attributed to Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups (45), including JAS (37) and unidentified affiliated or splinter groups (8), and to unidentified perpetrators (23), occurring in the Far North (45) and North-West (23) Regions. Of those, 32 children were released or escaped, while the status of 36 children is unknown.

228. Ten incidents of denial of humanitarian access were verified and attributed to unidentified perpetrators (8) (including 1 during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces) and to the Cameroon Armed Forces (2).

Developments and concerns

229. I welcome the creation of a commission of inquiry following the attack in Ngarbuh, North-West Region, on 14 February 2020, which resulted in 14 children killed. In June 2020, the Government announced the arrest of two Cameroon Armed Forces soldiers and a gendarme, whose trial began in December. I also welcome the conviction of members of a vigilante committee for the killing in April 2015 of two children allegedly associated with Boko Haram in the Far-North Region. I call upon the Government to pursue its efforts towards accountability for all grave violations against children.

230. According to the Government, 72 children (34 boys, 38 girls) formerly associated with Boko Haram, including unidentified affiliated or splinter groups, were released in 2020 and transited through a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centre in Méri, Far North Region. I welcome this development and call upon the Government to transfer the children to civilian child protection actors and to ensure that children have access to child- and gender-specific disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and that their rights are protected.

231. I am concerned about the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups and on national security-related charges. I call upon the Government to treat all children formerly associated with armed groups as victims, in line with international juvenile justice standards, including the use of detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and to release all detained children. I urge authorities to adopt a protocol for the handover of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors.

232. The brutality of grave violations perpetrated by JAS and other Boko Haram-affiliated or splinter groups remains a grave concern, notably the use of children, particularly girls, as carriers of improvised explosive devices. I am deeply concerned by the grave violations in the North-West and South-West Regions, including denial of humanitarian access and attacks on schools and protected persons in relation to schools, resulting in the killing and maiming of children. I urge all parties in Cameroon to immediately cease all violations against children.

India

233. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of two boys by unidentified perpetrators. The United Nations is reviewing reports of the use of three boys by Indian security forces for less than 24 hours.

234. Four children were detained by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir for alleged association with armed groups.

235. A total of 39 children (33 boys, 6 girls) were killed (9) and maimed (30) by pellet guns (11) and torture (2) by unidentified perpetrators (13) (including resulting from explosive remnants of war (7), crossfire between unidentified armed groups and Indian security forces (3), crossfire between unidentified armed groups, and grenade attacks (3)), Indian security forces (13), and crossfire and shelling across the line of control (13).

236. The United Nations verified the use of seven schools by Indian security forces for four months. Schools were vacated by the end of 2020.

237. The United Nations did not verify grave violations in the context of the Naxalite insurgency.

Developments and concerns

238. I welcome the positive engagement of the Government with my Special Representative to put in place national preventive and accountability measures for all grave violations.

239. I remain concerned by grave violations against children in Jammu and Kashmir and call upon the Government to take preventive measures to protect children, including by ending the use of pellets against children, ensuring that children are not associated in any way to security forces, and endorsing the Safe Schools Declaration and the Vancouver Principles. I am alarmed at the detention and torture of children and concerned by the military use of schools. I urge the Government to ensure that children are detained as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, and to prevent all forms of ill-treatment in detention. I also urge the Government to ensure the implementation of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, to address the use of children for illegal activities and the situation of detained children.