

# Rise in number of children killed, maimed and recruited in conflict: UN report

More than 10,000 children were killed or maimed in conflict last year while more than 8,000 youngsters were recruited or used as combatants, the United Nations reported on Wednesday.

These violations contributed to the overall rise in the number of children globally affected by fighting in 2017, as documented in the [annual report](#) of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC).

UN chief António Guterres has expressed [outrage](#) over the numbers, according to a statement issued by his spokesperson.

“Boys and girls have once again been overly impacted by protracted and new violent crisis. Despite some progress, the level of violations remains unacceptable,” the statement said.

“The Secretary-General reiterates that the best way to address this horrific situation is to promote peaceful solutions to conflicts. He calls on all parties to exert maximum efforts in this regard.”

The report covers 20 countries, including hotspots such as Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan, but also situations in countries such as India, the Philippines and Nigeria.

[Virginia Gamba](#), the UN’s expert on Children and Armed Conflict, said 66 parties to conflict are listed this year – three more than in the 2016 report – with nine government forces and 57 armed groups named.

“Among the most significant violations registered in 2017 were killing and maiming, recruitment and use and attacks on schools and hospitals, all of which registered a rise in comparison to the previous year,” she told journalists at UN Headquarters.

Overall, the UN verified more than 21,000 grave violations of children’s rights between January and December 2017, compared with 15,500 the previous year.

Government forces committed at least 6,000 of these crimes while the majority involved various non-state armed groups.

Ms. Gamba said crises in the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Myanmar, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen were the main reason for the “serious increases” reported.

She provided examples, including what she described as the “despicable trend”

of turning children in Nigeria into “human bombs”, where nearly half of the 881 verified child casualties resulted from suicide attacks.

Also worrying is the number of children detained for their alleged association with armed groups. For example, more than 1,000 children in Iraq were held due their suspected affiliation with the terrorist group ISIL, also known as Daesh.

Ms. Gamba also reported positive developments, such as the formal release of more than 10,000 child soldiers from armed groups and forces, while four armed groups in Myanmar have agreed to work with her Office.