

**14<sup>th</sup> Secretary General Report on Children and Armed Conflict (A/69/926- S/2015/409)**  
**Section on Somalia**

145. The security situation remained extremely volatile, particularly in south-central Somalia, leading to displacement of more than 80,000 persons. The reporting period witnessed a gradual build-up of joint operations by the Somalia National Army and the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), driving Al-Shabaab out of key towns in southern and central regions.

146. A total of 1,870 violations against children were documented, affecting 1,482 boys and 250 girls, with 806 out of 893 incidents verified. While the numbers represent a substantial reduction compared with 2013, the decline is largely attributable to the reduced capacity and access to verify incidents.

147. The recruitment and use of 819 children (779 boys, 40 girls) by Al-Shabaab (437), national army and allied militia (197), Ahl Al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (109) and other armed elements (76) was documented. Of particular concern was the ongoing recruitment and use of children by clan militias. Al-Shabaab sustained a campaign of recruitment targeting children and youth in mosques and schools, for example, recruiting 82 children in mosques or during religious events. Reports were also received of five boys used by AMISOM in support functions.

148. The detention of children in Somalia remained a concern, with 286 children (277 boys, nine girls) detained by the national army and other security forces (229), Al-Shabaab (44) and other armed groups (4). Seven of the nine girls were kept in Al-Shabaab custody. Of the children detained by government security forces, many were arrested following house searches and security operations and most were released a few days after the arrest. Of concern is the situation of children held at the Serendi rehabilitation centre in Mogadishu, whom my Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict met during her visit in August. The children have been deprived of their liberty, as they are not free to leave the centre. The Government must ensure that any child deprived of his or her liberty for alleged association with armed groups is treated primarily as a victim and handed over to child protection actors.

149. Some 340 incidents of killing and maiming were documented affecting 520 children (393 boys, 127 girls) perpetrated by the national army and allied militia (193), Al-Shabaab (96), and other armed elements (231). Children have been killed in crossfire, sometimes during joint national army/AMISOM operations and in suicide attacks. Targeted attacks against the national army, AMISOM and prominent Federal Government of Somalia officials also led to large numbers of civilian casualties, including children. Al-Shabaab carried out public executions, including of children, as punitive measures and to instil fear. One boy and one girl were executed on suspicion of being spies for the Federal Government or AMISOM. Seventeen children were reported killed and maimed during military operations by AMISOM.

150. The monitoring and reporting of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children remained a challenge, among other things, because of the victims' fear of stigmatization. A total of 70 incidents affecting 76 girls were reportedly committed by the national army and allied militia (24), Al-Shabaab (19) and other armed groups (33). Girls in internally displaced persons camps were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence and forced marriage. At least 13 documented incidents of abduction resulted in rape and forced marriage. In one particularly tragic incident in April, a 14-year-old female internally displaced person was abducted, raped and then killed by unknown armed men.

151. Seventeen schools were subjected to attacks by Al-Shabaab (eight), the national army and allied militia (six), and unknown armed elements (three). One school was also severely damaged in shelling by AMISOM. Al-Shabaab continued to use schools for recruitment and disrupted learning for hundreds of children including by distributing jihadist booklets for teachers and conducting indoctrination lectures. Incidents targeting protected personnel were also documented such as the detention of two teachers by Al-Shabaab for declining to refer their students to religious classes. Four schools were used for military purposes by the national army (three), later vacated, and Al-Shabaab (one). It was also reported that AMISOM used a school for military purposes during a few days in December.

152. Four hospitals were attacked by unknown armed groups (3) and Al-Shabaab (1) and incidents affecting related-personnel were documented. In one incident, Al-Shabaab abducted a health worker to provide medical care to its wounded fighters. Other incidents included improvised explosive device attacks against two hospitals resulting in the deaths of two doctors and two boys.

153. A total of 133 children were abducted, by Al-Shabaab (97), the national army and allied militia (25), and unknown armed groups (11). More than half of the children abducted by Al-Shabaab were used to increase its numbers ahead of joint national army/AMISOM operations.

154. Fifteen incidents of denial of humanitarian access were reported, the majority by unknown armed groups, and 3 each by Al-Shabaab and the national army.

155. My Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict visited Somalia in August to assess the situation of children affected by conflict, engage with the Federal Government of Somalia on the

implementation of the two action plans signed in 2012 to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children and advocate for the strengthening of the legal framework for the protection of children.

156. Coordination mechanisms between the United Nations, the Federal Government of Somalia, AMISOM and other partners were established to facilitate the implementation of the action plans. Significant steps were also taken with the signature of standard operating procedures for the handover of children separated from armed groups in February and the establishment of a child protection unit at the national army headquarters. Moreover, a mobile national army/United Nations team screened over 1,000 soldiers and the Barre Aden Shire “Hirale” militia that surrendered in anticipation of integration into the national army. No children were found during the screening exercises. The United Nations provided training on child protection to more than 8,000 national army soldiers, in collaboration with the European Union Training Mission in Somalia and AMISOM. In addition, following United Nations advocacy, the AMISOM Force Commander issued a directive to reinforce accountability and compliance with children’s rights during operations.

157. Following the listing of Ahl Al-Sunna wal-Jama’a for the recruitment and use of children, the United Nations initiated dialogue with the group and discussed steps towards the formulation of a commitment to halt and prevent continuation of the practice.

158. The United Nations also supported the reintegration of 500 children (375 boys, 125 girls) through community-based programmes. Reintegration activities included provision of psychosocial assistance, “back-to-school” support programmes and vocational training.

159. In December, in a positive legislative development, the Federal Parliament adopted a law ratifying the Convention of the Rights of the Child. The law was signed by President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud on 20 January 2015. I welcome the progress made by the Federal Government of Somalia and I encourage it to sustain all its efforts to better protect children in Somalia, including by finalizing the ratification process of the Convention and to take steps to ratify its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

**13<sup>th</sup> Secretary General Report on Children and Armed Conflict (A/68/878- S/2014/339)**  
**Section on Somalia**

116. The United Nations documented the recruitment and use of 1,293 children, including by Al-Shabaab (908), the Somali National Army and allied militia (209), and Ahl al-Sunna wal-Jama'a (ASWJ) (111). The remaining cases were attributed to the Somaliland Armed Forces (15) and to unknown armed elements (36). Al-Shabaab continued its campaign for the recruitment of children and youth. For instance, on 24 January, Al-Shabaab recruited six boys, as young as 12, in a Koranic school in south-west Baidoa. In separate incidents, 19 children, as young as 15, were recruited during dedicated campaigns in Bardhere district, Gedo region, and Jilib district, Middle Juba region. Al-Shabaab uses children in various roles, including as combatants and to gather intelligence. Of particular concern are 14 cases of association of children with the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) in various capacities, including to man checkpoints and as cooks. The United Nations has been regularly engaging with AMISOM leadership with a view to addressing these cases and enhancing the mainstreaming of child protection.

117. The arbitrary arrest and detention of 1,009 children by the national army, including during operations against Al-Shabaab, remained a grave concern in 2013. In 11 cases, girls who had been arrested were also raped. Upon advocacy by the United Nations, 41 children detained by the national army for alleged association with Al-Shabaab were released in 2013.

118. At least 237 children were reportedly killed (179 boys and 58 girls) and 494 children were injured (383 boys and 111 girls) in 2013. The national army and allied militias were reportedly responsible for 334 child casualties (98 killed and 236 injured), followed by unknown armed groups (83 killed, 174 injured), Al-Shabaab (47 killed, 67 injured), AMISOM (7 killed, 14 injured), ASWJ (two killed, one injured), and the Puntland and the Somaliland forces (one child each injured). Child casualties mainly resulted from crossfire during clashes and indiscriminate shelling. Thirty children were killed and 51 others injured in incidents involving improvised explosive devices. In one incident, in December, a 16-year-old boy was executed by the Al-Shabaab for attempted desertion.

119. In 154 incidents of sexual violence, 152 girls and 2 boys were raped, including by unknown armed elements (65), members of the national army and allied militias (49), Al-Shabaab (31), ASWJ (7) and the Somaliland forces (2). Twenty of the girls were subjected to sexual violence in the context of forced marriages following recruitment into Al-Shabaab. The rape of 21 children in 19 separate incidents by national army and unknown armed elements inside internally displaced persons camps was a particular concern since the camps were supposed to be a safe place for displaced children.

120. Fifty-four attacks on schools and 11 attacks on hospitals by the national army (28), Al-Shabaab (18), unknown armed groups (7) and ASWJ (1) were documented. Four of the attacks on schools by Al-Shabaab and an unknown armed group resulted in the recruitment of 34 boys. In addition, Al-Shabaab used schools for recruitment campaigns.

121. In 2013, 863 boys and 237 girls formerly associated with armed forces or groups were enrolled in reintegration programmes in Mogadishu, Merka, Guriel, Dhusamareb and Afgoye districts. The United Nations also continued to engage with the Federal Government of Somalia to ensure the implementation of the two action plans to end and prevent the recruitment and use and the killing and maiming of children by the national army. With the establishment of the United Nations Assistance Mission (UNSOM) in July, one Child Protection Adviser was deployed to further support the process. In addition, a working group on children and armed conflict, comprising representatives of the Government, the United Nations, non-governmental organizations, and the donor community, was established in Mogadishu and reviewed standard operating procedures for the handover of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups before adoption by the Government in March 2014. Furthermore, I welcome the commitment of the Federal Government of Somalia to become party to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, in particular in respect of the involvement of children in armed conflict, and urge the Government to ratify them.

**12<sup>th</sup> Secretary General Report on Children and Armed Conflict (A/67/845- S/2013/245)**  
**Section on Somalia**

121. In 2012, the country task force documented 4,660 cases of violations against children, of which 2,051 concerned recruitment and use of children (2,008 boys and 43 girls). Children were reportedly recruited by armed forces and armed groups from camps for internally displaced persons, schools and villages. Al-Shabaab also coerced teachers into enlisting pupils.

122. Al-Shabaab was the main perpetrator (1,789 cases of recruitment and use of children), followed by the Somali National Armed Forces (179 cases). A total of 53 of those cases took place after the Transitional Federal Government signed an action plan on 3 July 2012 to halt and prevent the recruitment and use of children.<sup>9</sup> On 9 September 2012, five boys between 16 and 17 years of age were recruited by the national armed forces in Beletweine district, Hiran Region. They were previously associated with Al-Shabaab and had escaped to join the government forces. In addition, it was reported that, in April 2012, a girl carried out a suicide attack at the National Theatre. Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, a Government-allied militia integrated into the national armed forces in 2012, was responsible for 51 cases of recruitment and use of children. On 18 February 2012, six children between 15 and 17 years of age were recruited by the militia in Beletweine district.

123. In 2012, the country task force verified 296 cases of killing of children (228 boys and 62 girls) and 485 cases of maiming of children (326 boys and 132 girls). The killings were perpetrated by unknown armed groups (111), Al-Shabaab (94) and the national armed forces (70). According to the World Health Organization, the four major hospitals in Mogadishu treated weapons-related injuries of 230 children under 5 years of age during the period under review. Most of the cases verified by the country task force involved crossfire and mortar attacks. On 10 March 2012, for example, stray bullets injured three children between 11 and 14 years of age during fighting between Al-Shabaab and the national armed forces in Yurkud village, Berdaale district, Bay Region. Children were also allegedly killed for spying. On 18 January 2012, a 15-year-old boy associated with Al-Shabaab was killed by Al-Shabaab in Rabdhure district, Bakool Region, for allegedly spying for the national armed forces. On 16 September 2012, the country task force received allegations of ill-treatment of children implicating the national armed forces in Afgoye district, Lower Shabelle Region. According to reliable sources, the national armed forces arrested and detained 10 children on suspicion of being Al-Shabaab members. It is alleged that they were subjected to ill-treatment and acts tantamount to torture while in police custody. That information, however, could not be verified.

124. During the reporting period, the country task force received reports of 213 cases of sexual violence committed against 210 girls and 3 boys, mostly in central and southern Somalia. The incidents were attributed to the national armed forces (119), Al-Shabaab (51) and unknown armed groups (43). Following the end of the transitional period and establishment of the new Government, the Government issued a statement on 25 November 2012 in which it acknowledged that sexual violence was being perpetrated by its national armed forces and committed itself to ending the violations. My Special Representative will work with the Government to decisively address the issue.

125. During the reporting period, Al-Shabaab (51) and the national armed forces (14) were also responsible for attacks on schools. Al-Shabaab was responsible for a further 11 attacks on hospitals in 2012 in Hiran (4), Lower Juba (4), Middle Shabelle (2) and Middle Juba (1).

126. The country task force received information on 1,533 cases of abduction (1,458 boys and 75 girls) during the reporting period. Most were reported in central and southern Somalia and were perpetrated by Al-Shabaab (780) and the national armed forces and allied militias (720). On 28 May 2012, for example, around 30 children between 12 and 17 years of age were taken into custody by the national armed forces in Afgoye corridor, Lower Shabelle Region, on suspicion of being members of Al-Shabaab. The country task force is following up on this incident. Most of the southern and central parts of Somalia remained inaccessible, however, owing to the volatile security situation.

127. In 2012, humanitarian access continued to be affected by attacks targeting humanitarian workers, roadblocks and looting of humanitarian supplies, mainly in southern Somalia. There were a total of 96 attacks on aid workers or their assets, 27 incidents of aid interventions (aid diversions, lootings, confiscations or sabotages) and 20 cases relating to denial of movement.

128. On 3 July 2012, the Transitional Federal Government signed an action plan to end the recruitment and use of children, and, on 6 August 2012, another action plan to end killing and maiming of children. Progress towards their implementation was limited, however, owing to the election period and the appointment of the new Government. The President nevertheless pledged his strong commitment to implementing both action plans. The Government reported that it had issued strict guidelines prohibiting the recruitment of children into the national armed forces and that the implementation of the action plan was in the planning process.

129. In October 2012, the Government established, together with the United Nations, a joint technical committee in charge of the coordination and implementation of the action plans. On 7 and 8 October 2012, the country task force held a validation workshop with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior to

finalize standard operating procedures for the handling and release of children who are captured, who surrender or who are otherwise separated from armed groups and who find themselves in the custody of the national armed forces or AMISOM. AMISOM efforts to reduce civilian casualties notwithstanding, slow progress has been made in the implementation of the civilian casualty, tracking, analysis and response cell. AMISOM has, however, instituted training on protection of women and children as part of the predeployment training for all AMISOM troops.

**11<sup>th</sup> Secretary General Report on Children and Armed Conflict (A/66/782- S/2012/261)**  
**Section on Somalia**

97. In 2011, the United Nations documented 948 cases of recruitment of children, mostly by Al-Shabaab. There were also documented cases of recruitment and use by the Transitional Federal Government and allied militia. Separately, the Transitional Federal Government forces inadvertently recruited 86 children, who were identified and repatriated from Bihanga military training camp in Uganda in April and August 2011. While 11 of these children joined a United Nations-supported reintegration programme, a number of them were reportedly released without undertaking a formal release process, and others reportedly remain in the custody of Transitional Federal Government forces.

98. In June 2011, mass recruitment by Al-Shabaab in Kismayo, Lower Juba region, was reported by a victim of child recruitment, who indicated that the recruitment took place in Kismayo town and that over 80 children remained in the training camp from which he had escaped. Reports were also received of girls recruited and forcibly married to Al-Shabaab combatants. Children were typically recruited by Al-Shabaab from schools and madrasas, particularly in internally displaced person settlements in Somalia and refugee camps in neighbouring Kenya. Forced recruitment increased in 2011 as a result of the escalation of military operations in Somalia.

99. In 2011, 127 cases of abduction were reported. Most abductions and detentions were carried out by Al-Shabaab in South Central zone.

100. In 2011, 7,799 child casualties of conflict were registered in the three main hospitals in Mogadishu. The main cause of death among children below the age of 5 were burns, chest injuries and internal haemorrhage caused by blasts, shrapnel and bullets. In addition, the United Nations verified the killing of at least 189 children and the injury of 362 as a result of conflict. For example, in October, in Mogadishu, Banadir region, Al-Shabaab conducted a suicide attack against the Ministry of Education using a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device. Hundreds of children waiting outside to apply for scholarships were affected; at least 15 children were killed and 18 were seriously wounded.

101. A total of 252 cases of rape and sexual violence were reported in 2011. Continued fighting has rendered children more vulnerable to rape and sexual violence, particularly in open and unprotected internally displaced person settlements and especially in Mogadishu. The Transitional Federal Government and allied militia were the main alleged perpetrators in Mogadishu and border areas. In August and September 2011, the United Nations noted a trend emerging where multiple perpetrators raped the same victims in a group setting. Cases of sexual slavery were also reported, with Al-Shabaab fighters reported to have taken girls as young as 9 years old for marriage. Sexual violence in Al-Shabaab-controlled areas was underreported, given the significant fear of reprisals.

102. In 2011, Al-Shabaab and militia groups continued to target schools. In May 2011, a teacher was killed by Al-Shabaab in the Hiiran region for opposing the recruitment of children. In August 2011, Al-Shabaab used a school in Elwak district, Gedo region, for military purposes, disrupting the education of over 500 children. Since February 2011, the school has been used intermittently. In December 2011, Al-Shabaab militia attacked and used a secondary school in Merka district, Lower Shabelle region, as an operations centre. Schools in Mogadishu have been reportedly closed or used by Transitional Federal Government forces.

103. The ongoing conflict continued to restrict humanitarian access and hamper the delivery of assistance, especially in areas controlled by Al-Shabaab. This was further complicated by military interventions in the fourth quarter of 2011. Humanitarian actors have experienced increasing difficulty in accessing South Central zone, particularly following the access ban against 16 humanitarian organizations issued by Al-Shabaab in November 2011. It is estimated that the access ban affected over 3.5 million people — half of them children. The ban affects regions that were critically affected by the famine of 2011.