

223. The United Nations verified the killing (99) and maiming (128) of 227 children (91 boys, 92 girls, 44 sex unknown) by JNIM (113); unidentified perpetrators (58), including 11 in crossfire between the Defence and Security Forces and JNIM; ISGS (48); the Defence and Security Forces (4) and *Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie* (4). Casualties resulted mainly from gunshots and physical assault (95 each) and improvised explosive devices (15). Most violations occurred in the Sahel (121) and Centre-Nord (85) Regions.

224. The United Nations verified rape and other forms of sexual violence against nine girls by unidentified perpetrators (5), JNIM (3) and ISGS (1).

225. There were 85 verified attacks on schools (46) and hospitals (39), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals, attributed to ISGS (37); JNIM (37); unidentified perpetrators (10), including four in crossfire between the Defence and Security Forces and JNIM; and the Defence and Security Forces (1), mostly in the East (58) Region. Incidents involved the abduction and killing of related protected persons, threats directed against protected persons, and the destruction, looting and forced closure of schools.

226. Two schools and one hospital were used for military purposes by the Defence and Security Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (1).

227. A total of 250 children (88 boys, 159 girls, 3 sex unknown) were abducted by JNIM (187), mostly as punishment for not adhering to JNIM norms, by unidentified perpetrators (55) and ISGS (8). Most violations occurred in the Centre-Nord (177) and Sahel (66) Regions. Among those abducted, 238 children were subsequently released.

228. Seventeen incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to JNIM (8), ISGS (7) and unidentified perpetrators (2) in the Sahel (10), East (4) and North (3) Regions. Incidents included threats and violence directed at humanitarians, the abduction of humanitarians, as well as looting.

Developments and concerns

229. I welcome the fact that the Government progressed with the validation of a handover protocol for the transfer of children allegedly associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors. I call upon the authorities to endorse and implement the protocol, to treat children associated with armed groups primarily as victims and to release all children in its custody.

230. I am deeply troubled by the sharp increase in grave violations. I am alarmed by the scale of abductions, particularly of girls, and by the recruitment and use of children, with JNIM as the main perpetrator. I urge JNIM and other parties to cease all violations and release associated children.

231. I call upon parties to immediately cease the killing and maiming of children and take necessary measures to protect children during operations, and to cease and prevent attacks on schools and hospitals and on protected persons and prevent their military use. I call upon all parties to engage with the United Nations to end and prevent violations and further urge the authorities, including *Volontaires pour la défense de la patrie*, to prevent grave violations committed during security operations and to pursue accountability.

Cameroon

232. The United Nations verified 174 grave violations against 129 children (62 boys, 57 girls, 10 sex unknown) in the Far North (94), North-West (45) and South-West (35) Regions, including 7 children who were victims of multiple violations.

233. Three boys, some as young as 10, were recruited and used by unidentified Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups as spies and to run errands in the Far North Region.

234. Five children (2 boys, 3 girls) were detained in Far North by the Cameroon Armed Forces for their alleged association with armed groups and remained in detention as at December 2021.

235. A total of 75 children (48 boys, 25 girls, 2 sex unknown) were killed (44) and maimed (31) by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (50), including Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (JAS) (25) and Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) (2); the Cameroon Armed Forces (14) and unidentified perpetrators (11), including in crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces (4). Casualties occurred in the Far North (49), South-West (14) and North-West (12) regions and resulted mainly from gunshots (55) and improvised explosive devices or explosive remnants of war (16).

236. Sexual violence perpetrated against one girl by unidentified perpetrators was verified in the South-West Region.

237. A total of 22 attacks on schools (18) and hospitals (4), including protected persons in relation to schools and/or hospitals were attributed to unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (16), ISWAP (2), the Cameroon Armed Forces (2) and unidentified perpetrators (2), including one attack that occurred during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces. Incidents were verified in the North-West (11), South-West (8) and Far North (3) Regions and involved attacks and threats against related protected persons, including their killing and abduction, and destruction and damage to facilities.

238. The United Nations verified the military use of 21 schools by the Cameroon Armed Forces in the Far-North for one year. Four schools continued to be used as at December 2021.

239. The United Nations verified the abduction of 55 children (14 boys, 33 girls, 8 sex unknown) by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups (39), including JAS (24) and ISWAP (2), and unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (16). Violations occurred in Far North (39), North-West (12) and South-West (4) Regions. Children were abducted for ransom (16), recruitment and use (3) and for unknown purposes (36). Of the 55 who were abducted, 12 children were rescued or released, 7 remain in captivity, 3 were arrested by the Cameroon Armed Forces, while the status of 33 is unknown.

240. A total of 18 verified incidents of the denial of humanitarian access were attributed to unidentified armed groups in the North-West and South-West (14) Regions, the Cameroon Armed Forces (3) and unidentified perpetrators during crossfire between armed groups and the Cameroon Armed Forces (1). Incidents involved the abduction of, and threats and violence against, humanitarian personnel and assets, access restrictions and looting in North-West (10) and South-West (8) Regions.

Developments and concerns

241. I welcome the training of police officers on child protection, including in the North-West and South-West Regions, by the United Nations. I call upon the Government to extend the training to all defence and security forces. I also call upon the Government to ensure that disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes consider the specific needs and rights of children formerly associated with armed groups and to allow child protection actors access to all disarmament, demobilization and reintegration centres. I further call upon the Government to pursue

its efforts to strengthen the protection of children, including by ensuring accountability for grave violations against children.

242. I am concerned about the detention of children for their alleged association with armed groups. I call upon the Government to treat these children primarily as victims, with detention as a measure of last resort, and to release all children in its custody. I urge the Government to adopt a handover protocol for children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors.

243. I am deeply concerned about the continued grave violations in the North-West and South-West Regions, particularly the denial of humanitarian access, including the detention of humanitarian personnel and attacks on schools, including the killing and abduction of teachers and students. I urge all parties to immediately cease all violations and protect schools and hospitals and prevent their military use.

244. I urge Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups in the Far North Region to put an end to violations and immediately release associated children.

India

245. The United Nations verified 54 grave violations against 49 children (45 boys, 4 girls).

246. The recruitment and use of 18 boys by armed groups in Jammu and Kashmir was verified.

247. A total of 33 boys were detained by Indian security forces in Jammu and Kashmir for their alleged association with armed groups or on national security grounds.

248. A total of 34 children (30 boys, 4 girls) were killed (5) and maimed (29) by Indian security forces, including by the use of pellets by the Central Reserve Police Force (19), unidentified perpetrators (4), crossfire between armed groups and unidentified perpetrators (7), and crossfire and shelling across the line of control (4).

249. The killing of two teachers by an armed group in Srinagar was verified.

Developments and concerns

250. I welcome the ongoing engagement of the Government with my Special Representative, including the interministerial meeting held in November 2021 and the appointment of a national focal point to identify priority national interventions so as to enhance the protection of children. I further welcome the agreement to a joint technical mission to hold interministerial, technical-level meetings with the United Nations during 2022 to identify areas of enhanced cooperation for child protection. This enhanced engagement may lead to the removal of India as a situation of concern from my next report on children and armed conflict, should all practical measures agreed to in such meetings be fully implemented by that date.

251. I welcome the legal and administrative framework for the protection of children and improved access to child protection services in Chhattisgarh, Assam, Jharkhand, Odisha and Jammu and Kashmir, and progress in the creation of a Jammu and Kashmir commission for the protection of children's rights, but I remain concerned about the risk of child recruitment by armed groups in affected districts.

252. I am concerned by the increased number of violations against children verified in Jammu and Kashmir. I call upon the Government to strengthen child protection, including by ending the use of pellet guns against children and building the capacity of its forces. I am concerned by the detention of children, and I urge the Government to ensure that children are detained as a last resort and for the shortest appropriate