

that operations are conducted in line with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precaution, and to immediately correct and reinforce existing measures to ensure the protection of children affected by armed conflict. I reiterate my call upon all parties to continue to engage with my Special Representative and the United Nations, including at the country level, to end and prevent grave violations against children and to better protect children and respect international humanitarian law and international human rights law.

93. I am shocked by the number of children killed and maimed by Israeli forces during hostilities, in air strikes on densely populated areas and through the use of live ammunition during law enforcement operations, and by the persistent lack of accountability for these violations. I express serious concern regarding the excessive use of force and reiterate that security forces must exercise maximum restraint and use lethal force only when it is strictly unavoidable in order to protect life and put in place preventive and protective measures to end and prevent any excessive use of force against children. I note the existing procedures, which have been shared with my Special Representative, and I urge Israeli authorities to review and strengthen their procedures to prevent any excessive use of force. I further urge Israel to continue to investigate each case where live ammunition was used, as required by procedure, and to pursue accountability for violations against children. I exhort Israel to better protect schools.

94. I am concerned by the increase in the number of children detained by Israel and by the reports by children of physical violence directed against them during detention. I reiterate my call upon Israel to uphold international juvenile justice standards, including the use of detention as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time, to end the administrative detention of children, and to prevent any violence and ill-treatment in detention.

95. I am concerned by the increase in the killing and maiming of children by Palestinian armed groups and by recurrent incidents of recruitment and use of children. I call upon Palestinian armed groups to cease the recruitment and use of children and to abide by their domestic and international legal obligations. I call upon Palestinian armed groups to cease all indiscriminate launching of rockets and mortars from densely populated areas in Gaza towards Israeli civilian population centres. I urge all Palestinian armed groups to protect children, including by preventing them from being exposed to the risk of violence or by abstaining from instrumentalizing them for political purposes.

## **Lebanon**

96. The United Nations verified 55 grave violations against 51 children (45 boys, 6 girls).

97. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of 32 boys, between the ages of 11 and 17, by unidentified armed groups (24), Fath al-Islam (3), Hizbullah (2), Jund Ansar Allah (1), Saraya al-Muqawama<sup>7</sup> (1) and Da'esh (1).

98. Children continued to be arrested and prosecuted under military jurisdiction on national security-related charges, with the verified detention of three boys.

99. A total of 19 children (13 boys, 6 girls) were killed (9) and maimed (10) by unidentified perpetrators as a result of armed clashes (12), cluster munitions or explosive remnants of war (7).

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<sup>7</sup> The Lebanese Resistance Brigades, known in Arabic as Saraya al-Muqawama, is a non-denominational paramilitary group affiliated with Hizbullah.

100. The United Nations verified four attacks on schools by unidentified perpetrators in Palestine refugee camps.

*Developments and concerns*

101. I reiterate my call upon the Government to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict.

102. I am concerned about the continued detention of children. I urge the Government to release these children to reintegration actors and treat them primarily as victims. The detention of children should be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time.

103. I am concerned about the increasing recruitment and use of children and call upon armed groups to cease this practice.

104. I am disturbed by continuing armed clashes in Palestine refugee camps and their negative impact on children. I urge the Palestinian National Security Forces to fully apply their Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics in these camps.

**Libya**

105. The United Nations verified 63 grave violations against 52 children (32 boys, 20 girls).

106. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of one boy by forces affiliated with the former Government of National Accord, which occurred before March 2021.

107. The United Nations verified the detention of 125 children and their mothers, of several nationalities, for their mothers' alleged association with Da'esh, by the Judicial Police, in Judaydah prison (93), by the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism, in Mitiga prison (22), and by the Libyan National Army (LNA) and affiliated forces (10) in Kuwayfayah prison. Eighteen of the children were repatriated to their countries of origin.

108. The verified killing (17) and maiming (21) of 38 children (28 boys, 10 girls) was attributed to unidentified perpetrators (28), including in crossfire between the Deterrent Agency for Combating Organized Crime and Terrorism and the Stability Support Apparatus (1), and LNA and affiliated forces (10), and were mostly caused by explosive remnants of war (20) mortar shelling (6) and landmines (6).

109. Sexual violence was verified as having been perpetrated against seven girls by the Abu Issa Brigade and Tripoli Revolutionaries Brigade in control of detention facilities of the Department for Combating Illegal Migration.

110. One attack on a school by unidentified perpetrators was verified in Tripoli.

111. The abduction of six children (3 boys, 3 girls) was attributed to forces affiliated with the former Government of National Accord (1) before March 2021, the Internal Security Agency (4) and unidentified perpetrators (1).

112. Ten denials of humanitarian access were attributed to forces affiliated to the Government of National Unity (1) and unidentified perpetrators (9).

*Developments and concerns*

113. I welcome the efforts of the Libyan authorities to strengthen the protection of children, in particular the declaration by the Government of National Unity of