

85. I am also concerned by the two incidents of children recruited by al-Qassam Brigades. I call upon al-Qassam Brigades to cease the recruitment and use of children and to abide by its domestic and international legal obligations. 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.

86. I call upon all parties to engage with 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.

Lebanon

87. The United Nations verified 16 grave violations against 16 children (14 boys, 2 girls).

88. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of nine children (8 boys, 1 girl) by Jund Ansar Allah¹³ (3), unidentified perpetrators (2), Fath al-Islam (2) and ISIL (2). Three children were used as combatants.

89. Children continued to be arrested and prosecuted under military jurisdiction on national security-related charges, including allegations of terrorism, with the verified detention of two boys. As at December 2020, an additional three boys were detained.

90. Seven children (6 boys, 1 girl) were killed (6) and maimed (1) by unidentified perpetrators.

Developments and concerns

91. 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.

92. I reiterate my call upon armed groups to immediately cease the recruitment and use of children.

93. I am concerned about the continued detention of children for alleged association with armed groups, including those designated as terrorist groups by the United Nations, and urge the Government to treat children associated with armed groups primarily as victims, detain them only as a measure of last resort for the shortest appropriate period of time and refer them to reintegration programmes.

Libya

94. The United Nations verified 166 grave violations against 117 children (94 boys, 23 girls).

95. The United Nations verified the recruitment and use of nine boys by the Libyan National Army (LNA) and affiliated forces (3), forces affiliated with the former Government of National Accord (3) and Syrian armed opposition groups formerly known as the Free Syrian Army (Mu'tasim and Samarqand brigades) (3), which trafficked them from the Syrian Arab Republic to Libya.

96. The United Nations verified the detention of one boy by LNA and affiliated forces, and of 67 children and their mothers, from several nationalities, by the Judicial

¹³ A Palestinian armed group based mainly in the Ein El Hilweh and Mich Mich Palestine refugee camps of Lebanon.