

# Threat of War

Children's rights  
in situations of armed conflicts



A report by:



The International  
Children's  
Peace Prize

### **About KidsRights**

KidsRights is an international non-governmental organization that promotes the well-being of vulnerable children across the world and advocates for the realization of their rights. We strive for a world where all children have access to their rights and are empowered to realize their great potential. We consider children as changemakers who have the power to move the world. We support children by commanding global attention for the realization of children's rights and acting as a catalyst to ignite change, together with children and youth. To achieve this goal, our advocacy is supported with research and action. We support local projects developed by children aimed at directly improving the rights of children and stimulating child participation.

### **About International Children's Peace Prize**

The International Children's Peace Prize is awarded annually to a child who has made an exceptional difference for the rights of the child and the position of vulnerable children, anywhere in the world. In 2024, the message of the young winner reached 3.8 billion people worldwide. The International Children's Peace Prize is the most important and prestigious youth prize in the world. The International Children's Peace Prize was launched in Rome during the 2005 World Summit of Nobel Peace Laureates chaired by Mikhail Gorbachev. Since then, each year the prize has been awarded by a Nobel Peace Laureate.

Every year, KidsRights Foundation publishes a report on the theme of the winner of the International Children's Peace Prize to highlight the need to prioritize and address specific children's rights concerns. This report is based on the theme of the 2025 winner of the International Children's Peace Prize, Bana Alabed (15 years old) from Syrian Arab Republic, who is fighting to give a voice to children in conflict zones.

**Authors:** Martina Garcia Miñaur Parreño, Avinash Reddy Pichhili, KidsRights Foundation

## Table of contents

1. Introduction .....	3
Grave violations of children’s rights on a rise .....	3
2. Global impact of armed conflicts on children .....	4
a. Right to life, survival and development (Art. 6 CRC) .....	4
b. Rights of refugee children (Art. 22 CRC).....	4
c. Rights to the highest attainable standard of health (Art. 24 CRC).....	5
d. Right to access to education (Art. 28 and 29 CRC).....	5
e. Right to protection in war (Article 38 CRC) .....	5
3. Regional: West Asia and North Africa (WANA).....	6
4. National.....	7
a. Palestine .....	7
b. Syrian Arab Republic .....	7
c. Sudan.....	8
d. Myanmar .....	8
e. Ukraine.....	8
4. Recommendations .....	10
Appendix I: Countries that have not yet ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in Armed Conflicts.....	11
Appendix II: State and non-State armed groups committing grave violations against children in situations of armed conflicts .....	12

## 1. Introduction

The world is facing an unprecedented number of armed conflicts (wars) with millions facing violence, displacement, and loss of life. The number and intensity of armed conflicts have been growing exponentially for the past few years. Globally, as many as 185 conflicts were recorded in 2024, leading to the deaths of over 161,000 people.<sup>1</sup> Children are one of the most vulnerable groups that are affected by this ongoing global crisis, especially considering the lack of respect for their most basic rights and their heightened vulnerability during armed conflicts.

This report highlights the impact of armed conflicts on children and calls on the international community to take the necessary steps to prioritize the safety of children and protect children's rights worldwide.

### **Grave violations of children's rights on a rise**

In the recent years, armed conflicts have become an increasing source of concern and risk. In 2025, 'State-based armed conflict' was ranked as the most significant global risk by over 900 leaders across governments, businesses, and civil society, as per the WEF's Global Risks report. Notably, in WEF's 2024 report, 'State-based armed conflict', was ranked at eighth place, indicating a sharp rise in geopolitical tensions worldwide.<sup>2</sup> Further, in 2024, world military expenditure reached \$2718 billion - an increase of 9.4 per cent in real terms from 2023 and the steepest year-on-year rise since at least the end of the cold war.<sup>3</sup>

Armed conflicts are categorised into *international armed conflict*, where armed forces representing States clash with each other, and *non-international or internal armed conflict*, where governmental forces and non-State armed groups clash within a State.<sup>4</sup> Armed forces of 8 States and non-State armed groups in 16 countries have been identified by the UN for committing grave violations of children's rights during armed conflicts (Appendix II). Non-State armed groups accounted for 50% of grave violations.<sup>5</sup> At the same time, the number of State-based armed conflicts, has increased to an unprecedented level – highest recorded post-World War II.<sup>6</sup>

Considering the excessive and disproportionate impact of armed conflicts on children, the following six grave violations were identified by the UN Security Council to monitor and prevent child rights violations: killing and maiming; recruitment or use in armed forces and groups; rape and other forms of sexual violence; abduction; attacks against schools and hospitals; denial of humanitarian access.

The increase of grave violations<sup>7</sup> has profound physical and psychological consequences, on children and their communities.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the international community must collectively aim to prevent such grave violations, and the competent authorities must conduct thorough investigations to ensure the perpetrators are brought to justice.



## 2. Global impact of armed conflicts on children

Children are particularly vulnerable in situations of armed conflicts. Globally, nearly 500 million children are currently living in conflict zones, depriving them of their childhood and exposing them to unprecedented levels of violence.<sup>9 10</sup>

Several children’s rights enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), are persistently being violated by the State and non-State armed groups during armed conflicts – either directly or indirectly. Direct impact relates to attacks on children, attacks on schools and hospitals, recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts, displacement of children etc. Indirect impact relates to violation of children’s rights arising due to their heightened vulnerabilities because of the armed conflicts. This includes greater risk of exposure to child marriage, child trafficking, forced and child labour, and denial of access to education, healthcare and justice system, among others.

### Global scale of impact of armed conflicts on children in 2024 <sup>11 12 13</sup>



Violation of children’s rights continues unabated despite the repeated calls from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child to comply with the CRC during armed conflicts, including its statements against using starvation as a weapon of war in Gaza,<sup>14</sup> and grave violations in the Democratic Republic of Congo.<sup>15</sup>

### Global child rights violations during situations of armed conflict

#### a. Right to life, survival and development (Art. 6 CRC)

- 11,967 children have been killed or maimed in 2024.<sup>16</sup>
- 126 % increase in the denial of humanitarian access to children (2021-2024). 7,906 independent incidents were reported.<sup>17</sup>

#### b. Rights of refugee children (Art. 22 CRC)

- Nearly 25 million children have been displaced from their countries due to armed conflicts by the end of 2024.<sup>18</sup>
- 2.3 million children were born as refugees (2018-2024)

**c. Rights to the highest attainable standard of health (Art. 24 CRC)**

- In 20 conflict-affected countries, more than 1 in 3 children face malnutrition, making conflict the main driver of the worst food crises worldwide in 2024.<sup>19</sup>
- Around 40% of unvaccinated and under-vaccinated children live in countries that are either partially or entirely affected by conflict in 2024.<sup>20</sup>

**d. Right to access to education (Art. 28 and 29 CRC)**

- 52 million children out of school in conflict-affected countries in 2024.<sup>21</sup>
- 44% increase in attacks on schools in conflict zones in 2024.<sup>22</sup>

**e. Right to protection in war (Article 38 CRC)<sup>23 24</sup>**

- 166% increase in attacks on schools and hospitals since 2021.
- 4.573 children were abducted in 2024.<sup>25</sup>
- 3.018 children were detained for association with armed forces or groups in 2024.<sup>26</sup>

Several other children's rights are also impacted due to armed conflicts, including right against discrimination, right to identity and nationality, and right to an adequate standard of living. Children also have the right to recovery and reintegration as victims of armed conflicts.<sup>27</sup> It is reported that 16,482 children who were previously associated with armed groups received protection or reintegration support during 2024.<sup>28</sup>

Concerted efforts of all stakeholders are required to curb the child rights violations during armed conflicts, and to develop and implement child-centric post-conflict strategies to support child victims of armed conflicts.

### 3. Regional: West Asia and North Africa (WANA)<sup>29</sup>

The West Asia and North Africa (WANA)<sup>30</sup> region is currently the most conflict-affected area in the world, with over 45 active armed conflicts across Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Israel, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, and Western Sahara. The majority are non-international armed conflicts involving a complex mix of armed non-state actors and foreign interventions by Western powers, Russia, and neighbouring countries. The result is a region marked by chronic instability, fragmentation, and widespread humanitarian suffering, where prolonged warfare, displacement, and economic collapse continue to devastate civilian populations.<sup>31</sup>

#### Impact of armed conflicts in the WANA region in the last two years<sup>32</sup>



Armed conflict across the WANA region had a devastating impact on children, stripping them of safety, education, and access to basic services while exposing them to violence and exploitation. The widespread violation of children’s rights underscores the urgent need for the international community to strengthen its commitment to their protection and to ensure that children remain at the centre of humanitarian and peacebuilding efforts. This urgency is especially noticeable in Palestine and Syria, two of the world’s most dangerous and destructive conflicts, both at the heart of the WANA’s ongoing crisis.

## 4. National

### a. Palestine

Palestine is currently the most dangerous conflict in the world, marked by extreme and escalating levels of violence, devastation, and humanitarian collapse.<sup>33</sup> The conflict, reignited by Hamas’s deadly attack on Israel on October 7, 2023, evolved into a prolonged and brutal confrontation with catastrophic consequences for civilians in Gaza. The UN Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel concluded<sup>34</sup> - “Israeli authorities and Israeli security forces committed four of the five genocidal acts defined by the 1948 Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.”<sup>35</sup>

Although a cease-fire mediated by the United States, Egypt, and Qatar in January 2025 briefly raised hopes for peace, Israel renewed its offensive just two months later, launching large-scale military operations across Gaza City, Khan Yunis, and Rafah. The two-month total blockade on humanitarian aid created famine-like conditions, with widespread hunger, disease, and the collapse of essential services, prompting UN condemnation for violations of humanitarian principles.<sup>36</sup> Today, 90 % of Gaza’s current population of 2.1 million people has been displaced, lacking access to sufficient shelter, food, life-saving medical services, clean water, education and livelihoods.<sup>37</sup>

### The conflict in Palestine in numbers<sup>38 39</sup>

IN AUGUST 2025



**1 IN 5  
CHILDREN**

OVER  
**12,800  
CHILDREN**

DIAGNOSED WITH  
ACUTE  
MALNUTRITION IN  
GAZA CITY

IDENTIFIED AS  
ACUTELY  
MALNURISHED IN  
THE GAZA STRIP

SINCE OCTOBER 2023



MORE THAN  
**50,000  
CHILDREN**

**1 CHILD  
EVERY HOUR**

REPORTEDLY  
KILLED OR  
INJURED

KILLED  
IN PALESTINE

### b. Syrian Arab Republic

Syria is currently among the Top 3 of the most dangerous conflicts in the world,<sup>40</sup> reporting extreme danger levels and consistently concerning risk. Yet, despite this, global attention has largely shifted away, creating the false impression that the Syrian conflict has subsided. In reality, the war remains highly active and volatile. The fall of the Bashar al-Assad regime in December 2024 marked not an end to the conflict, but the beginning of a new and uncertain phase. Rebel groups, led by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) and the Turkish-backed Syrian National Army (SNA), overthrew the Assad government after more than five decades of family rule, fracturing what remained of central authority. Since then, Syria has been caught in a dangerous power vacuum characterized by shifting alliances, competing factions, and ongoing foreign involvement. Kurdish forces in the northeast continue to clash with Arab tribes and Turkish-backed groups, while the Islamic State has re-emerged to exploit the chaos. Meanwhile, Israel

continues to carry out regular airstrikes against Iranian-linked targets across the country.<sup>41</sup> The situation continues to escalate — for instance, in September 2025, northern Syria experienced a sharp surge in violence, with 40 recorded armed clashes, airstrikes, and shelling incidents, nearly doubling the 21 events documented in August.<sup>42</sup>

### The Syrian conflict in 2025 in numbers <sup>43</sup>



#### c. Sudan

The dire situation of children in armed conflict extends far beyond the WANA region, affecting millions across the globe. For instance, in Sudan, approximately 23 million children face widespread violence, abuse, and exploitation, with 64 percent of children under fourteen experiencing various forms of violence and over 32,000 children in contact with the law as victims, witnesses, or alleged offenders.<sup>44</sup>

#### d. Myanmar

While in Myanmar, ongoing conflict compounded by the devastating March 2025 earthquake has left millions of children in urgent need of humanitarian assistance. Between July 1st, 2020, and December 31st, 2023, The UN verified more than 5,100 grave violations against over 4,000 children, with recruitment, killing, maiming, and abduction accounting for the majority, largely perpetrated by the Myanmar Armed Forces.<sup>45</sup>

#### e. Ukraine

In Ukraine, children continue to face grave risks amid the ongoing war. Between February 2022 and December 2024, the UN verified 669 children killed and 1,833 injured, mostly from the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Vast parts of the country remain contaminated with landmines and explosive remnants of war, posing long-term threats to children’s safety. Further,

as of December 2024, an estimated 737,000 children were internally displaced and 1.7 million were refugees, many separated from a parent. Children in Russian-occupied areas are especially vulnerable to violence, displacement, and denial of humanitarian aid.<sup>46</sup>

These global examples underscore the urgent need for concerted action to protect children in armed conflicts. States and international actors must prioritize the safety, education, and well-being of children, prevent recruitment and exploitation, safeguard access to humanitarian aid, and integrate child-centric recovery and reintegration strategies to mitigate the long-term impacts of conflict on the world's most vulnerable populations.

## 4. Recommendations

### **Ensure the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child during armed conflicts**

- Prioritize safety of children during armed conflicts.
- Ensure adequate safeguards to prevent child trafficking in and around conflict-affected countries and regions.

### **Ensure special protection for children in situations of armed conflicts**

- Integrate special protections in national laws for children in the situation of armed conflicts, in line with international humanitarian, human rights and criminal law.
- Prevent any attacks on schools and hospitals to protect children.
- Prevent separation of children from their families.
- Ensure uninterrupted access to humanitarian aid for children.

### **Prevent recruitment of children into armed forces**

- Increase the minimum age for recruitment into the armed forces to at least 18 years without any exceptions (including voluntary military service, cadet training/schools, technical roles).

### **Adopt child-centric recovery and reintegration processes**

- Actively include children in recovery and reintegration processes.
- Prioritize physical and psychological recovery of children.
- Ensure children's access to education and healthcare during and post-conflict situations.

**Appendix I: Countries that have not yet ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in Armed Conflicts<sup>47</sup>**

<b>S. No</b>	<b>Countries</b>
1	Antigua and Barbuda
2	Barbados
3	Comoros
4	Cook Islands
5	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
6	Equatorial Guinea
7	Haiti
8	Iran (Islamic Republic of)
9	Lebanon
10	Liberia
11	Marshall Islands
12	Mauritania
13	Nauru
14	Niue
15	Palau
16	Papua New Guinea
17	Saint Kitts and Nevis
18	Sao Tome and Principe
19	Somalia
20	Tonga
21	Trinidad and Tobago
22	Tuvalu
23	United Arab Emirates
24	Zambia

## Appendix II: State and non-State armed groups committing grave violations against children in situations of armed conflicts<sup>48</sup>

Country (State actors)	Recruiting children into armed forces	Killing & maiming of children	Rape & other forms of sexual violence	Attacks on schools and/or hospitals	Abductions
Democratic Republic of Congo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Israel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myanmar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Somalia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
South Sudan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sudan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Syrian Arab Republic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Russia	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Non-State armed groups in countries	Recruiting children into armed groups	Killing & maiming of children	Rape & other forms of sexual violence	Attacks on schools and/or hospitals	Abductions
Afghanistan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Burkina Faso	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Central African Republic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Colombia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Democratic Republic of Congo	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Haiti	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Palestine	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lake Chad basin	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mali	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Myanmar	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Nigeria	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Somalia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
South Sudan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sudan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Syrian Arab Republic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Yemen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<sup>1</sup> Uppsala Conflict Data Program, (2025), Uppsala University, <https://ucdp.uu.se/year/2024>.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Muggah, (15 January 2025), "Why global cooperation is more important than ever in a world at war", World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/stories/2025/01/global-risks-report-conflict-global-cooperation/>

<sup>3</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, (28 April 2025), “Unprecedented rise in global military expenditure as European and Middle East spending surges”, SIPRI, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2025/unprecedented-rise-global-military-expenditure-european-and-middle-east-spending-surges>

<sup>4</sup> European Parliamentary Research Service (2023), “Armed conflict: A glossary of terms”, European Parliament, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS\\_ATA\(2023\)757582\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2023/757582/EPRS_ATA(2023)757582_EN.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, (17 June 2025), “Children and armed conflict, UN Doc. A/79/878-S/2025/247”, page 2, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>.

<sup>6</sup> Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), (9 June 2025), “New data shows conflict at historic high as U.S. signals retreat from world stage”, . <https://www.prio.org/news/3616>.

<sup>7</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, (17 June 2025) “Children and armed conflict, UN Doc. A/79/878-S/2025/247”, page 2, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>.

<sup>8</sup> International Committee of the Red Cross, (n.d.), “Protected persons: Children”, ICRC, <https://www.icrc.org/en/law-and-policy/protected-persons-children#:~:text=Children%20can%20become%20separated%20from%20recruitment%20by%20armed%20forces%20groups>.

<sup>9</sup> UNICEF, (28 December 2024), “Not the new normal’ – 2024 ‘one of the worst years in UNICEF’s history’ for children in conflict”, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/not-new-normal-2024-one-worst-years-unicefs-history-children-conflict>

<sup>10</sup> Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, (28 April 2025), “Unprecedented rise in global military expenditure as European and Middle East spending surges”, SIPRI, <https://www.sipri.org/media/press-release/2025/unprecedented-rise-global-military-expenditure-european-and-middle-east-spending-surges>

<sup>11</sup> Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 25 July 2025, page 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/266>.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, UN Doc. A/80/266, page 3.

<sup>13</sup> UNICEF, (28 December 2024), “Not the new normal’ – 2024 ‘one of the worst years in UNICEF’s history’ for children in conflict”, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/not-new-normal-2024-one-worst-years-unicefs-history-children-conflict>

<sup>14</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, (9 September 2025), “Gaza: UN Child Rights Committee condemns using starvation of children as weapon of war”, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/gaza-un-child-rights-committee-condemns-using-starvation-children-weapon-war>

<sup>15</sup> Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, (20 February 2025), “Children in Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) endure grave violations under siege, UN Committee warns”, OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/02/children-drc-endure-grave-violations-under-siege-un-committee-warns>

<sup>16</sup> Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 25 July 2025, page 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/266>.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, (17 June 2025), “Children and armed conflict”, UN, Report of the Secretary-General A/79/878-S/2025/247, p. 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>

<sup>18</sup> UNICEF, (June 2025), “Close to 50 million children had been displaced due to conflict and violence globally by the end of 2024”, UNICEF, <https://data.unicef.org/topic/child-migration-and-displacement/displacement/>

<sup>19</sup> Save the Children, (23 September 2025), “Number of children facing malnutrition in conflict fails to improve as global goal to end hunger off track”, Save the Children, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/number-children-facing-malnutrition-conflict-fails-improve-global-goal-end-hunger-track>

<sup>20</sup> United Nations News, (27 December 2024), “2024 ‘one of the worst years in history for children in conflict’”, UN News, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2024/12/1158561>

<sup>21</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, (15 May 2025), “Protection of civilians in armed conflict”, UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General S/2025/271, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/271>

<sup>22</sup> United Nations News, (9 September 2025), “Attacks on schools surge by ‘staggering’ 44 per cent over the past year”, UN News, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2025/09/1165810>

<sup>23</sup> Geneva Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

<sup>24</sup> Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I).

<sup>25</sup> Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, (25 July 2025), page 3, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/80/266>.

<sup>26</sup> Id.

<sup>27</sup> Article 39, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>28</sup> Report of the Secretary-General, (17 June 2025), “Children and armed conflict, UN Doc. A/79/878-S/2025/247”, page 2, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>.

- <sup>29</sup> UNICEF, (1 July 2025), "Every five seconds, a child is displaced, injured, or killed in the Middle East and North Africa's conflicts", UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/every-five-seconds-child-displaced-injured-or-killed-middle-east-and-north-africas>
- <sup>30</sup> The WANA region is commonly known as Middle East and North Africa (MENA), which is not being used here due to its colonial origins.
- <sup>31</sup> Geneva Academy of International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights, (2025), "Today's Armed Conflicts", Geneva Academy, <https://geneva-academy.ch/galleries/today-s-armed-conflicts>
- <sup>32</sup> UNICEF, (1 July 2025), "Every five seconds, a child is displaced, injured, or killed in the Middle East and North Africa's conflicts", UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/every-five-seconds-child-displaced-injured-or-killed-middle-east-and-north-africas>
- <sup>33</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, (2025), "ACLED Conflict Index", ACLED, <https://acleddata.com/series/acled-conflict-index>
- <sup>34</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (16 September 2025), "Legal analysis of the conduct of Israel in Gaza pursuant to the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide – Conference room paper" (A/HRC/60/CRP.3), OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/hrbodies/hrcouncil/sessions-regular/session60/advance-version/a-hrc-60-crp-3.pdf>
- <sup>35</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, (16 September 2025), "Israel has committed genocide in the Gaza Strip, UN Commission finds", OHCHR, <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/09/israel-has-committed-genocide-gaza-strip-un-commission-finds>
- <sup>36</sup> Center for Preventative Action, (2 October 2025), "Israeli-Palestine Conflict", Global Conflict Tracker (GCT), <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/israeli-palestinian-conflict>
- <sup>37</sup> United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), (n.d.), "Occupied Palestinian Territory", OCHA, <https://www.unocha.org/occupied-palestinian-territory>
- <sup>38</sup> UNICEF, (11 September 2025), "Devastating rate of child malnutrition in the Gaza Strip in August surpasses July record", UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/devastating-rate-child-malnutrition-gaza-strip-august-surpasses-july-record>
- <sup>39</sup> Save the Children, (2025), "GAZA: 20,000 children killed in 23 months of war – more than one child killed every hour", Save the Children, <https://www.savethechildren.net/news/gaza-20000-children-killed-23-months-war-more-one-child-killed-every-hour>
- <sup>40</sup> Raleigh, Clionadh, and Katayoun Kishi, (December 2024), *ACLED Conflict Index*, Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), <https://acleddata.com/series/acled-conflict-index>
- <sup>41</sup> Center for Preventative Action, (3 October 2025), "Conflict in Syria", Global Conflict Tracker (GCT), <https://www.cfr.org/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/conflict-syria>
- <sup>42</sup> Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project, (2025), "Middle East Overview: October 2025", ACLED, <https://acleddata.com/update/middle-east-overview-october-2025>
- <sup>43</sup> United Nations Children's Fund, (2025), *The situation of children in Syria*, UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/syria/situation-children-syria>
- <sup>44</sup> UNICEF, (2025), "Child protection – Sudan", UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/sudan/child-protection>
- <sup>45</sup> United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, (15 April 2025), "Myanmar: Sharp Increase in Grave Violations Against Children", Children and Armed Conflict, <https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/2025/04/myanmar-sharp-increase-in-grave-violations-against-children/>
- <sup>46</sup> Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, (21 March 2025), "UN report details devastating impact of hostilities on children in Ukraine", UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, <https://ukraine.ohchr.org/en/UN-report-details-devastating-impact-of-hostilities-on-children-in-Ukraine>
- <sup>47</sup> Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Ratification status of the Optional Protocol.
- <sup>48</sup> United Nations Secretary-General, (17 June 2025), "Children and armed conflict, Report of the Secretary-General A/79/878-S/2025/247", UN General Assembly Security Council, <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2025/247>