



[The United Nations Adds Israel to Its List of Offenders Committing Violations Against Children](#)

Every year, the United Nations publishes a report that specifically focuses on children in conflict zones called *Children and Armed Conflict Report*, and this year Israel will be named on the list for the first time. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called Israeli Ambassador to the UN Gilad Erdan recently on June 8th to inform Erdan of his decision to include Israel in the yearly report. The *Children and Armed Conflict Report* started back in 2000 under Former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and has continued every year since. The UN recognizes “six grave violations” against children as the most prevalent: the killing and maiming of children, the recruitment or use of children as soldiers, sexual violence against children, the abduction of children, attacks against schools or hospitals, and the denial of humanitarian access for children.

The report starts with a brief overview and introduction of the general state of armed conflicts that include children. This includes the total number of grave violations that the UN has verified, as well as the progress that was made since the last report’s publishing. From there, every country that the Secretary-General has selected gets further broken down based on their specific number of verified violations and then what actors (state or non-state) they have been attributed to. Finally, in the annex, countries are further divided into those that have and have not put in place measures to improve the protection of children. Several high-profile organizations and countries have made the list that Israel is now set to join including the Taliban, Boko Haram, and ISIS. Following the 2014 Gaza War, which resulted in the deaths of over 2,000 Palestinians, Israel was almost placed on the list but narrowly avoided it due to lobbying efforts by its representatives.

The reaction from Israel has unsurprisingly been anything but positive. Israeli Ambassador to the UN Erdan took to X on June 7th to share a video of his response to the official notification that the IDF was going to be placed on the “blacklist.” When speaking to reporters, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres’s spokesperson Stephane Dujarric explained that the reason Israel was notified in advance of the list’s publication next week was as “a courtesy afforded to countries that are newly listed on the annex.” Meanwhile, Palestinian officials and human rights defenders praised the UN’s decision, expressing that it provides proof to the world that Israel’s military operations in Gaza have targeted non-combatants such as children. Others added that while the move will not bring back the tens of thousands of innocent civilians that have been killed in Gaza, it is at least an important step in the right direction toward ending the double standard and culture of impunity that Israel has benefited from for far too long.

While the significance of the decision to add Israel to the list has been rightly acknowledged, it is important to also note that the move holds no exacting power. A country’s inclusion on the list does not mean that the UN will be able to pursue specific action against them. For example, Russia earned its spot on the list last year because of its detaining, killing, and maiming of Ukrainian children but the UN took no formal action against it. However, the list can be brought up during UN meetings, and since all of the information is verified by the UN, it has the potential to be cited as a reason to take legal action against a particular country.

The inclusion of Israel in the United Nations *Children and Armed Conflict Report* for the first time underscores the grave concerns surrounding the treatment of children in conflict zones, especially during the ongoing conflict in

Gaza where investigators have shed light on the alarming number of children that have been killed or injured there. Israel's inclusion only serves as further evidence of the egregious human rights abuses and war crimes that they have committed in Gaza, and should bolster the importance of putting an end to the devastating war and protecting children, the most vulnerable victims who deserve safeguarding above all.