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New Report: UN Must List Saudi Arabia-Led Coalition for Violating Child Rights in Yemen

Warring parties committed at least 160 attacks on medical facilities and personnel over past two years, including deadly airstrike on children's hospital

Attacks have contributed to closure of hospitals and worsened health conditions for children

NEW YORK - A military coalition led by Saudi Arabia in Yemen must be named in the UN's annual list of perpetrators of child rights violations for carrying out repeated attacks on medical facilities and personnel, a new report says today.

The [report](#), by Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and Save the Children, documents a series of deadly attacks on hospitals and medics over the past two years – and calls on UN Secretary-General António Guterres to add the Saudi Arabia-led coalition to his list of those responsible for grave violations of children's rights in conflict.

In 2016 then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon briefly listed the coalition for killing children and attacking schools and hospitals in Yemen, only to later remove it after pressure from Saudi Arabia. This year's UN report on Children and Armed Conflict is due to be published in the coming months.

Appearing on the list is an international embarrassment for states and non-state actors, which can usually only be removed after meeting UN-verified benchmarks for ending and preventing violations.

In addition to the Saudi Arabia-led coalition, other warring parties in Yemen have also been implicated in the 160 attacks on medical facilities and personnel over the past two years. These attacks have contributed to damage and destruction of Yemen's medical facilities, and worsened conditions for children's health, the report said. Fewer than half of the medical facilities in the country are functioning, according to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The country is on the brink of famine, with 3.3 million children and pregnant or lactating women suffering from acute malnutrition and more than 460,000 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition, according to OCHA. Every 10 minutes, a child in Yemen dies of preventable causes, according to UNICEF. Since 2014, the mortality rate for children under five has increased by nearly 20 percent, UNICEF said.

In one documented case, two infants in incubators reportedly died from a lack of oxygen after a pediatric hospital in Sanaa was damaged in an airstrike by the Saudi Arabia-led coalition.

Hospitals that remain open face severe shortages of medicine and equipment, in large part due to the de facto naval blockade imposed by the coalition on Yemen's main port of Hodeidah, the country's lifeline for food and essential supplies. Warring parties have detained aid workers and hampered the delivery of food and medicine by land.

In addition to the Saudi Arabia-led coalition (which consists of ten countries and gets support from the United States), parties to the conflict include Yemeni government forces and the Houthis (also known as Ansar Allah) and their allies. Watchlist also recommends that the United States and other UN member states immediately stop providing weapons to the coalition when there is a chance they may be used in attacks against hospitals and other violations.

Christine Monaghan, research officer at Watchlist, said:

“The UN Secretary-General cannot bow to pressure from Saudi Arabia, but must hold the Saudi Arabia-led coalition responsible for repeated attacks on medical facilities and staff. They are leading to the closure of hospitals, compromising children's access to treatment, and increasing rates of injury and disease.”

Grant Pritchard, interim country director for Save the Children in Yemen, said:

“For two years bombs have been landing on hospitals, homes, and schools. On the ground our teams are helping children who have been physically and mentally scarred, and are supporting hospitals that are now forced to hold damaged incubators together with sticking tape. All parties have been responsible for the unnecessary deaths of children in Yemen, and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition is among them. Those responsible must be held to account.”

The full report, *“Every Day Things are Getting Worse” The Impact on Children of Attacks on Health Care in Yemen*, is available here: <http://watchlist.org/about/report/yemen/>

NOTES:

- More than half of the health facilities in 16 of the 22 assessed governorates in Yemen are closed or partially functioning due to the conflict, leaving over 14.8 million people in need of basic healthcare including 8.1 million children (OCHA)
- Yemen is facing the largest food security emergency in the world with 17 million people lacking food: 6.8 million people are in the “emergency” phase – one stage before famine – and 10.2 million people are in the “crisis” phase. There are 3 million (or 20%) more food insecure people in March 2017 compared to June 2016 ([IPC Report](#)).
- According to OCHA ([Yemen 2017 HRP](#)), 7,469 people have been killed and 40,483 injured (47,952 total casualties) between March 2015 and December 31, 2016.
- Between March 2015 and February 23, 2017, 4,667 civilians were killed and 8,180 injured. ([OHCHR](#)).

- The ongoing conflict has had a devastating impact on children. According to [UNICEF](#), between March 26, 2015, and February 28, 2017, at least 1,546 children were killed and 2,450 others maimed.

[Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#) is a New York-based global coalition that serves to end violations against children in armed conflict and to guarantee their rights.

[Save the Children](#) gives children in the United States and around the world a healthy start, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. We invest in childhood — every day, in times of crisis and for our future. Follow us on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).

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