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U.N. Blacklists Saudi Arabia Coalition for Killing Children in Yemen

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The United Nations yesterday released its annual blacklist for armed groups and states that violate the rights of children during conflict. One new addition to the list includes the Saudi Arabia-led coalition that is currently engaged in a Yemen war, while killing and maiming children [1].

Saudi armed forces started a military campaign In Yemen last year to prevent Iran-allied Houthi rebels who followed the beliefs of Yemen's ex President, Ali Abdullah Saleh, from controlling the country. As a result of the war, many civilians, including children have been killed during airstrikes [2].

According to a report released by United Nations Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon on Thursday, the coalition has been responsible for a number of incidents since the war's commencement in March 2015. The United Nations recorded a "six fold increase" of children killed and maimed in 2015 in contrast to previous years. The Saudi coalition caused 60 percent of 510 deaths and 667 injuries involving children last year alone [3].

The United Nations report said violations against children in Yemen increased significantly as a result of the escalating conflict.

"In Yemen, owing to the very large number of violations attributed to the two parties, the Houthis / Ansar Allah and the Saudi Arabia-led coalition are listed for killing and maiming and attacks on schools and hospitals," said the United Nations Secretary General in his annual report [3].

According to the United Nations, groups are blacklisted when they: "engage in the recruitment and use of children, sexual violence against children, the killing and maiming of children, attacks on schools and / or hospitals and attacks or threats of attacks against protected personnel, and the abduction of children" [2].

Other groups, such as the Houthis, Hadi forces and pro-government militia have been on the list for several years, and are labeled as "persistent perpetrators" against children's rights. However violent the coalition has been in in the past, this is their first time being blacklisted by the United Nations [3].

DR Congo, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Myanmar and Somalia were some other governments also included in the report. The US was mentioned indirectly, but the report faulted a US attack on a "Doctors Without Borders" hospital in Afghanistan and blamed it on "international forces." While the US admitted to the attack, they denied it was a war crime.

Although they are large contributors to the Saudi-led war against Yemen, this has never been mentioned in a United Nations Report [4].

Israel and Hamas were also not present in this year's report, the inclusions of which are annual "hot topics" for debate.

Notes

[1] "UN Adds US-Supported Saudi Coalition to 'List of Shame' for Killing Children in Yemen", Nadia Prupis, *Common Dreams,* June 3, 2016.

[2] "U.N. adds Saudi coalition to blacklist for killing children in Yemen", Michelle Nichols, *Reuters,* June 2, 2016.

[3] "UN blacklists Saudi Arabia-led coalition for 'killing and maiming' children in Yemen air strikes", Lizzie Dearden,*Independent,* June 3, 2016.

[4] "Saudi Arabia Blacklisted By UN For Killing Children In Yemen", MintPress News Deak, *MintPress News*, June 3, 2016.

Tiarne Blackwell is a final-year journalism student who is trying to make her mark in the world.

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