

UN Thinks Killing Children is Bad, Unless You're Saudi Arabia

By [Michaela Whitton](#)

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The U.N. has caved to pressure and removed Saudi Arabia from a blacklist of states and groups that kill children. Saudi Arabia's [U.S.-backed](#) military coalition was recently listed among countries, rebel movements, and terrorist groups responsible for "grave violations" against children during armed conflict.

Originally published on June 2, the annual U.N. [report](#) documents the horrific violations committed against children in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria and Yemen in 2015. The 40-page document claims that in the last year, the Saudi-led coalition has been responsible for 60% of child deaths and injuries in Yemen's bloody conflict.

That is, until the United Nations abruptly changed its mind.

On Monday, Saudi Arabia's permanent representative to the U.N. complained to Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon about the Gulf state's inclusion on the list. Enraged Saudi senior diplomats claimed figures were "[wildly exaggerated](#)" and [threatened](#) Riyadh, the Saudi capital and seat of power, would use its influence to convince other Arab governments and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to sever ties with the United Nations.

Despite the fact that the Saudis' devastating intervention in Yemen has been [well-documented](#) — and includes the [targeting of schools](#) and [hospitals](#) — the strong-arming was successful. By Monday, Ban Ki-moon had backtracked and [stated](#) he would remove the coalition from the list, pending a review by a joint U.N and Saudi panel.

U.N. credibility has been on the line for a while, in part due to the jaw-dropping allegations that peacekeepers were involved in [rape and indiscriminate killings](#) in the Central African Republic. More recently, Anders Kompass, director of field operations at the UN human rights office in Geneva — who also [blew the whistle](#) on the sexual abuse of children — resigned from the agency, citing the organization's failure to hold officials to account.

Responding to the backtracking, Oxfam's Country Director in Yemen, Sajjad Mohamed Sajid, [said](#) political power and diplomatic clout have trumped the U.N.'s duty to expose those responsible for killing and maiming Yemen's children. Claiming the retraction of the findings is a moral failure that goes against everything the U.N is meant to stand for, he added:

"The killing of children in their homes, at schools and in hospitals should not be swept under the carpet. When the U.N. identifies crimes such as these in needs

to act, regardless of who the perpetrators are.”

Amnesty International expressed similar outrage and [accused](#) the U.N. of blatant pandering:

“This is a stark example of why the U.N. needs to stand up for human rights and its own principles — otherwise it will rapidly become part of the problem rather than the solution.”

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