

Children suffer grave atrocities in Sudan's conflict – UN reports

27 March 2017 – Fewer children have been recruited to fight in parts of Sudan, but they are still killed and injured, and victims of sexual violence in the country, according to a new report by the United Nations Secretary-General.

“Boys and girls continued to be victims of grave violations committed by all parties to the conflict, including killing and maiming, sexual violence and attacks on schools and hospitals,” said Leila Zerrougui, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.

The report, released on Friday, details the impact of the armed conflict on children in Darfur, South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Abyei between March 2011 and December 2016.

During that time period, nearly 1,300 children were either killed or maimed in conflict as a result of hostilities between the Government and the armed groups. The majority of the casualties took place in Darfur, according to the report.

Rape and sexual violence were also a major concern in Darfur, where the UN confirmed at least 372 children were victimized.

“In most cases, children were raped during attacks on their villages or while getting wood or water in the vicinity of camps for displaced people,” the report authors wrote.

Despite these ongoing atrocities, the report notes a positive trend in recruitment and use of children – with fewer being conscripted.

However, there are concerns about cross-border recruitment and use of children by Sudanese and South Sudanese groups, notably the SPLM/N, Sudan People's Liberation Army-in Opposition and Justice (SPLA-iO) and Equality Movement (JEM).

Since 2011, the Government of Sudan has strengthened its national framework to protect children and raised the minimum recruitment age for national forces to 18.

In addition, the UN has signed three Action Plans with national authorities to protect children, as well as separately with SPLM/N and JEM.

The Special Representative has called on the Government and all other parties to conflict to take concrete measures to protect children.