

Crimes against Humanity: The Children of Iraq, Killed and Maimed Twice

Once by the forces that invaded and occupied Iraq and once by the International Human Rights Bodies

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa](#)

Theme: [Crimes against Humanity](#)

In-depth Report: [IRAQ REPORT](#)

And there is, I am certain, among the Iraqi people a respect for the care and the precision that went into the bombing campaign. (Donald Rumsfeld, DoD News Briefing April 09, 2003, former Secretary of Defense, indicted for war crimes, Kuala Lumpur, November 2012)

On 26 April 2012 the annual Report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on children and armed conflict(A/66/782-S/2012/261) was issued.[1] The report covered the period from January to December 2011 and was submitted to the UN Security Council on June 11.

On 19 September 2012, the Security Council, under the German Presidency, held its annual debate about this issue. The Security Council adopted a resolution strongly condemning violations of international law against children in armed conflict, calling on States to bring persistent perpetrators of violations to justice and reiterating its readiness to take targeted and graduated measures against such perpetrators. [2]

The report provides a global overview of violations perpetrated against children's rights in situations of armed conflict, as well as the measures taken to protect them.

The most important feature of the Annual Report is the "list of shame". This is a list of government forces and rebel groups that commit grave violations against children's rights. These are the armed actors that recruit or use children in their ranks; rape, kill or maim children; and repeatedly attack schools or hospitals or threaten teachers and students. Following last year's adoption of Security Council Resolution 1998, this is the first Annual Report to list parties to conflict known for attacks on schools and hospitals.

The "list of shame" is growing rapidly. It now contains 52 names, 32 of which are so-called 'persistent perpetrators' - parties to conflict whose names have featured on the "list of shame" for five years or more. [3]

Beautiful words and hopeful prospects to guarantee the safety and well-being of children in war-torn countries. However, it comes as a big surprise to many human rights and peace activists and reasonable people worldwide, that neither the US, nor the UK, nor any member state of NATO, is listed in this "list of shame". Yes, many African countries figure in the list (as usual), but none of the Western countries. How is that possible? Do they not invade and occupy countries and kill and maim children in Iraq, Afghanistan... ? Are they not the main

producers of the weapons that kill and maim millions of children?

The BRussells Tribunal, supported by more than 200 NGO's, submitted solid evidence of extreme violence against the children of Iraq by US occupation forces, during the 19th session on the General Assembly on the 8th of March 2012.

Joint statement by The International Youth and Student Movement for the United Nations (ISMUN), Union of Arab Jurists, the International Organization for the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination (EAFORD), Arab Lawyers Union, General Arab Women Federation (GAWF), North-South XXI, The United Towns Agency for the North-South Cooperation, and International Educational Development, Inc. (IED),

Violence against Iraqi Children

Delivered by

Ms. Beatrijs KENTANE of the BRussells Tribunal

President,

I would like to thank the Special representative of the Secretary General and the special rapporteur for their reports and bring to their attention the precarious situation of the Iraqi children.

The destruction caused by the invasion and occupation of Iraq has increased violence against children.

There are five million Iraqi orphans, many live on the streets without family, all subjected to violence.

There has been a 30 percent drug addiction increase among children to ease the pain and sufferings inflicted by the occupation.

Other violence issues to be studied by the UN: a case of about 800 girls under the age of 18, disappeared in the first seven years after the war. Up to 65 % among the prostituted females are minors. Some are victims of torture in case of gang- rape. Children of prostitutes are sold or raped by paedophile customers. The highest demand is for girls as young as 11. They have been trafficked into neighbouring countries.

In some cases girls request to remain in detention centres fearful that their families will kill them.

Exposure to violence on a daily basis has affected their psychological development and behaviour.

Landmines and explosive remnants of war with many victims being children under the age of 14 .

Since the conflict hundreds of children have been detained. They were placed in juvenile detention centres where they are exposed to another level of violence.

It is important to note that attacks on educational institutions by the army and affiliated

militias, to intimidate, frighten, kidnap, arrest and kill students, occur on a regular basis. As a consequence school attendance has decreased dramatically. School buildings are often used for military purposes. Iraq's educated and professional class fled following the assassination of colleagues as part of a targeted campaign, with devastating effect on the children's development and wellbeing.

The International community and International human rights bodies should not ignore the situation resulting from the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We ask the council to discuss the whole situation of human rights of Iraq and appoint a special rapporteur to the country.

Finally, we expressed our concerns about the Iraqi children in three written statements already published for this session under number 142, 143, 147 and they are among the documents of today's meeting. [4] [5]

Why have the reports about the dreadful situation of the Iraqi children, caused by 13 years of inhuman sanctions, invasion and 9 years of US occupation, been submitted to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights if the Special Representative has totally ignored them? The arrogance of it!

* Children_of_Iraq_and_armed_conflicts

http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/Geneva2012/A_HRC_19_NGO_143_Children_of_Iraq_and_armed_conflicts.pdf A/HRC/19/NGO/143

* The_situation_of_Iraqi_children

http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/Geneva2012/A_HRC_19_NGO_142_The_situation_of_Iraqi_children.pdf A/HRC/19/NGO/142

* Iraqi_children_health_situation

http://www.brussellstribunal.org/pdf/Geneva2012/A_HRC_19_NGO_147_Iraqi_children_health_situation.pdf A/HRC/19/NGO/147

These reports focus on the violations by the occupying forces and the Iraqi authorities of the Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, Geneva, 12 August 1949[6], and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) [7].

An excerpt of report 147:

CRC : Article 6 (survival and development), Article 24 (health and health services), Article 26 (social security)

For two decades, Iraqi children, along with the rest of the population, have been subjected to grave human rights violations, caused by decades of war, foreign occupation and international sanctions, Iraq has turned into one of the worst places for children in the Middle East and North Africa with around 3.5 million living in poverty, 1.5 million under the age of five undernourished and 100 infants dying every day, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF).[8]

Since the invasion in 2003, the US/UK forces and the Iraqi authorities grossly failed to fulfill their most basic duties towards the children of Iraq in accordance with the UN Convention

on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Resolution 25/ Session 44, November 1989.[9]

Principles of the CRC emphasize the need to protect children's rights' to life and physical, mental, moral, and spiritual development in a safe environment.

The Occupying powers bear full responsibility for the violations of these provisions and Conventions related to children. They should be held fully accountable for the harm they have inflicted upon the Iraqi children. They have deliberately changed the social fabric of the country, used ethnic cleansing to break up the unity of the country, destroyed water purification systems, health and educational facilities and indiscriminately bombed dense populated areas, leaving the children extremely vulnerable on all levels. Living in a country at war also causes mental disturbance to virtually all children, and acute anxiety and depression if not psychosis in a considerable number.

The Iraqi institutions and mechanisms that should ensure physical, social and legal protection for women, children and youth are dysfunctional and unreliable. As a result, the most vulnerable are exposed to exploitation and abuse, such as killing and maiming, kidnapping, gender based violence, human trafficking, recruitment and use by armed groups, child labor and deprivation of liberty.[10]

The international community and international Human Rights bodies also bear considerable responsibility for this alarming situation because they failed to adequately address the grave violations inflicted upon the young and vulnerable in the Iraqi society and failed to identify the real culprits.

Article 6 (survival and development) [11] Direct killings

Official figures and media-based estimates in Iraq, such as Iraq Body count, have missed 70-95% of all deaths. A more realistic and scientific estimate of war-related deaths comes from JustForeignPolicy.org, claiming 1.455.590 victims as of January 2011[12].

Analysis carried out for the research group Iraq Body Count found that 39% of those killed in air raids by the US-led coalition were children. Fatalities caused by mortars, used by American and Iraqi authorities forces as well as insurgents, were 42% children. [13]

Of the 45,779 violent deaths for which IBC was able to obtain age data, 3,911 (8.54%) were children under age 18. Of the 4,040 civilian victims killed by the US-led coalition forces for whom age data was available, 1,201 (29%) were children. [14]

Indirect killings

Many more children have been indirect victims, falling prey to disease, malnutrition or starvation.

Widespread poverty, economic stagnation, lack of opportunities, environmental degradation and an absence of basic services constitute 'silent' human rights violations that affect large sectors of the population", a UN report released on 08 August 2011 concludes. [15]

The WHO, the United Nations environment program, The British Royal Society, and the U.S. National Academy of sciences have published some general studies on the health effects of DU that suggested that the greatest health risks are found among children in post conflict

zones (Harper 2007), such as Iraq [16].

Special UN Representative for Children and Armed Conflict and UN Secretary General present distorted facts and outright lies to the world community

*This war has been marked by so many lies and evasions
that it is not right to have the war end with one last lie.*

Donald Rumsfeld, LA Times, 03-05-2006

Then who are – according to the report – the actors of the violence against children? Who kills or maims Iraqi children? Who attacked Iraqi hospitals and schools?

Let's hear it from the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Radhika Coomaraswamy, in her annual report:

“...In the reporting period (2011), armed groups, including Al-Qaida in Iraq and Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), continued to carry out violent attacks targeting security forces, Government buildings and civilians...”

“...Throughout 2011, armed groups such as Al-Qaida in Iraq and ISI, continued to recruit, train and use children to take part in hostilities...”

“...Armed groups, including Al-Qaida in Iraq and ISI, caused the large majority of Casualties...”

“...Twenty-seven education personnel and 17 medical workers were killed or injured in different incidents that included direct shooting and improvised explosive devices,

mostly in Baghdad, Kirkuk, Ninewa, Salahaddin and Anbar. Other incidents related to the abduction of medical staff and attacks against health facilities or civilian ambulances. Armed groups, including Al-Qaida in Iraq and ISI, were responsible in all reported cases...”

“...In the annexes to the present report, (*the so-called “shame list”*)...One new party has been listed for killing and maiming of children: the Syrian Government forces. Five parties have been listed for attacks on schools and/or hospitals: the Taliban forces, FDLR, Al-Qaida in Iraq, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Syrian Government forces.”

List of Shame: US and NATO member states do not kill or maim children?

Those who follow orders to commit such crimes will be found and they will be punished. War crimes will be prosecuted. And it will be no excuse to say, ‘I was just following orders.’ Any official involved in such crimes will forfeit hope of amnesty or leniency with respect to past action.

Donald Rumsfeld, Pentagon briefing, March 20, 2003

Iraq and Afghanistan are included in the list of parties that recruit or use children, kill or maim children, commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, or engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals in situations of armed conflict on the agenda of the Security Council, bearing in mind other violations and abuses committed against children.

Parties in Afghanistan

1. Afghan National Police, including Afghan Local Police.
2. Haqqani network
3. Hezb-e-Islami of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar
4. Taliban forces, including the Tora Bora Front, the Jamat Sunat al-Dawa Salafia and the Latif Mansur Network

Parties in Iraq

1. Al-Qaida in Iraq
2. Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) [17]

There's no mention in the report of any USA or NATO involvement in indiscriminate killings, sexual violence against children, or attacks on schools and/or hospitals. Huh? What about the facts mentioned in the submitted NGO reports? What about the daily NATO killing of Afghan children in wedding and funeral ceremonies and remote villages? What about the killing of Afghan, Yemeni and Pakistani children with unmanned drones?

The Report of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, issued on 06 August 2012, uncovers the unhealthy collaboration between NATO and the Office of the UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict:

“Since 2009, the Office of the Special Representative has been engaging with NATO, at their respective headquarters and in the field, to strengthen cooperation and better protect children affected by armed conflict. Consequently, in its Chicago Summit Declaration of 20 May 2012, NATO Heads of State and Government stated their commitment to the implementation of Security Council resolutions on children and armed conflict and noted with concern the growing range of threats to children in armed conflict. Significantly, they also pointed out that NATO-led operations, such as the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, were taking an active role in preventing, monitoring and responding to violations against children, including through predeployment training and a violations alert mechanism, in collaboration with the United Nations.

In this context, in February 2012, NATO appointed its Assistant Secretary General for Operations as the high-level focal point for children and armed conflict, in charge of maintaining close dialogue with the United Nations and exploring further opportunities for mainstreaming child protection in NATO training and operations. This welcome development should facilitate the identification and dissemination of good practices, based on the experience of the International Security Assistance Force, to be integrated into NATO predeployment training.”

“Engage with NATO to strengthen cooperation and better protect children affected by armed conflict”? While it is NATO that starts these wars of aggression in the first place? So these forces can kill all the children they want with impunity, under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Security Council. They bomb them in order to save them. War is Peace. Do they read newspapers? Do they read the reports of Human Rights Organisations? Why is there not a word of condemnation of the US and NATO daily massacres of children in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, Pakistan, Yemen and so many other places?

There’s one sentence in the report though, that may sound a tiny little bit critical for the NATO butchers:

“Forces mandated by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the African Union, for example, are exposed to child soldiering and the use of child victim bombers and must also ensure that their operations are consistent with their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law, as they relate to children, including with regard to the use of new technology.”

How courageous! Clap clap clap..... No, seriously: this is written in black and white, in an official report, by the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict of the United Nations. Who will protect the Iraqi and Afghan children from the United Nations? And who will protect our children from this hypocrisy and doublespeak?

United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced on 13 July the appointment of Leila Zerrougui of Algeria as his next Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. Ms. Zerrougui succeeds Radhika Coomaraswamy who has served as the Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict since April 2006. It looks as if this change will make little difference to halt the immense flow of disinformation that is pushed down our throats.

Denis Halliday, former UN Assistant Secretary General, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq 1997-1998, recipient of the 2003 Gandhi International Peace Award, quit his UN job in protest of what he called the “genocidal sanctions” imposed on Iraq. He expresses his disillusionment about the report:

“I have to say it to someone. The naiveté of our friends concerning this UN report would be amusing were it not so sad, and so serious an omission in their own perspective and understanding of the UN and its Member States.

Do they not understand that it is they themselves via their own Governments as UN Member States who are responsible for the output of UN Councils / committees / Assemblies on Children in Armed Conflict and children abused in violation of the Rights of the Child?

Have they forgotten it was the UN Security Council of their own Governments that imposed deadly sanctions on the innocent people of Iraq? And killed many adults and probably more than one million children? I resigned because of my near complicity with negligent / corrupt / vicious Member States, not because of a pathetically self-serving SG!

Do they not know their own UN created a generation of Sanctions children both physically and mentally damaged?”

Do they know the UN Council on Human rights / commissioner refused to examine UN

Sanctions as violations of Iraqi human rights?

Asma Al Haidari, a Jordan-based Iraqi Human Rights activists comments:

“They have as usual gone completely deaf dumb and blind about The Mehdi Militia, The Asaib Ahl Al Haq Militia and all the other Iranian backed, financed and armed militias including Hezbollah Al Iraq, as well as all the militias that have been included in and are now part of the security forces, created by the US invaders.

Even their numbers are incorrect and laughable about all the assassinations and killings of medical personnel – let them go and look up the numbers of imprisoned children who are systematically raped and killed by the Iraqi government!

Over 3 million people have been killed since the invasion – soon, soon I promise and pray, we will have the official numbers out once Iraq is liberated from this bondage and corruption – the numbers that are in the government’s possession and the UN as well as the Americans know about.

It makes me both angry and sick about all that is happening in Iraq.”

It is shameful for an international Human Rights Body to ignore the facts, to distort the facts, to lie to the world community, to become an instrument of imperial powers, to condemn some little fishes and let the big sharks get away with the most unspeakable crimes this world has ever seen.

This is the continuing rewriting of history, the continuing story of greed, world dominance and plunder of resources. The Iraqi children are the victims, once again.

But don’t weep.... Fight back ! Let justice prevail. Write to the Special Representative and the UN Secretary General to express your disgust about this biased report.

Dirk Adriaensens is coordinator of SOS Iraq and member of the executive committee of the BRussells Tribunal. Between 1992 and 2003 he led several delegations to Iraq to observe the devastating effects of UN imposed sanctions. He was a member of the International Organizing Committee of the World Tribunal on Iraq (2003-2005). He is also co-coordinator of the Global Campaign Against the Assassination of Iraqi Academics. He is co-author of Rendez-Vous in Baghdad, EPO (1994), Cultural Cleansing in Iraq, Pluto Press, London (2010), Beyond Educide, Academia Press, Ghent (2012), and is a frequent contributor to GlobalResearch, Truthout, The International Journal of Contemporary Iraqi Studies and other media.

Notes

[1]

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/320/83/PDF/N1232083.pdf?OpenElement>

2

<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/security-council-demands-end-to-grave-abuses-committed-against-children-in-conflict/>

3

<http://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/press-releases/52-parties-on-secretary-generals-list-o>

[f-shame-on-children-and-armed-conflict/](#)

4

<http://www.unmultimedia.org/tv/webcast/2012/03/uaj-joint-statement-id-on-violence-and-the-sale-of-children-25th-meeting.html>

5 http://www.brussellstribunal.org/Geneva_19thSession_2012.htm

6 Convention (IV) relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Geneva, 12 August 1949. <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/full/380>

7 <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/law/crc.htm>

8 IRAQ: A bad place for children <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportId=93133>

9 The convention was ratified by 194 United Nations countries, except the USA and Somalia

10 Fallen off the agenda? More and better aid needed for Iraq recovery
<http://reliefweb.int/node/360643>

11 FACT SHEET: A summary of the rights under the Convention on the Rights of the Child
http://www.unicef.org/crc/index_30228.html

12 Iraq Deaths <http://www.justforeignpolicy.org/iraq>

13 Iraq air raids hit mostly women and children, Kim Sengupta, 2009
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iraq-air-raids-hit-mostly-women-and-children-1669282.html>

14 Iraqi deaths from violence 2003–2011 Analysis and overview from Iraq Body Count (IBC), 2012 <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/analysis/numbers/2011/>

15 UN Calls Rights Situation in Iraq 'Fragile'
<http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2011/08/08-3>

16 Merrill Singer, G. Derrick Hodge, The war machine and global health: a critical medical anthropological examination of the human costs of armed conflict and the international violence industry. Elaine A. Hills, Dahlia S. Wasfi, The causes and human costs of targeting Iraq, p119.

17

<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N12/320/83/PDF/N1232083.pdf?OpenElement>

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