

Statement by H.E. Ambassador Majid Takht Ravanchi
Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the United Nations
On Children and Armed Conflict: Attacks Against Schools as a Grave Violation of
Children's Rights
Before the United Nations Security Council
New York, 10 September 2020

In the Name of God, the Most Compassionate, the Most Merciful

Mr. President,

Despite improvements in the area of children's rights, it is alarming that, according to the report of the Secretary-General, nearly 500 attacks on schools were conducted in 2019 worldwide.

During the Iraqi-imposed war on Iran, when the world Powers, including the United States, provided every support to Saddam Hussein, thousands of schools in Iran's occupied regions were destroyed completely and, only in areas outside the conflict zones, 1,362 schools were targeted by air strikes or missiles, a few examples of which include: missile attacks against a primary school in Behbahan martyring 72 students, aerial bombings of two schools in Borujerd martyring 66 children and air strikes against two schools in Mianeh martyring 68 schoolgirls.

In the Middle East, attacks against schools have always been a common feature of conflicts. The most systematic and gross violation of the rights of the child, including attacking schools, have definitely been committed by the Israeli regime. In 2019 alone, the United Nations verified 3,908 violations against Palestinian children by the Israeli regime, whose forces killed 32 Palestinian children, maimed 1,539 others and attacked 15 schools.

Attacks against schools in Iraq and Syria by terrorist groups, particularly Da'esh, have also been one of the main violations of the rights of the child in our region. However, except for the crimes of the Israeli regime against Palestinian children, none of the violations of the rights of the child in our region is as brutal or devastating, with far-reaching impacts on the future of children and their well-being, as the crimes committed in Yemen by Saudi Arabia. Between 2015 and 2020, Saudi air strikes have killed 3,468 children, destroyed 256 schools and caused damage to 1,520 other schools in Yemen.

The protection of schools requires first and foremost putting an end to current conflicts and preventing their re-emergence, as well as the emergence of new conflicts. Likewise, every effort must be made to ensure the full and effective implementation of international humanitarian law by the parties to conflict. The mechanism to list the parties violating the rights of children in armed conflict must also be used effectively and without discrimination or selectivity. It is a source of grave concern that the Israeli forces have never been blacklisted as violators of children's rights

in the relevant reports of the Secretary-General, and also that the name of Saudi Arabia has been deleted from the top of that list.

We share the views of several Council members that have expressed concern about the discrepancies between the violations described in the reports of the Secretary-General and the listing of the parties in their annexes, as well as the premature delisting of parties, and called for the consistent application of the criteria for listing and delisting parties, stressing the importance of upholding the impartiality and integrity of the listing and delisting mechanism.

We also strongly support the views expressed by a significant number of Member States about their concerns over the uneven application of the listing and delisting criteria, undermining the credibility of the monitoring and reporting mechanism. We also underline the importance of the call by a group of non-governmental organizations for greater transparency in the listing and delisting process.

At a time when the situation of children in armed conflict as well as the number of violations of their right to education is alarming, we need to redouble our efforts to prevent that trend, thereby contributing to peace and prosperity for the generations to come.

I thank you, Mr. President.