Modern slavery and the United Nations Security Council

Summary report

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Authorship and acknowledgements

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Content note

This report deals with the topic of modern slavery in conflict settings and includes reference to abuses experienced in this context. The report does not recount the specific experiences involved in modern slavery cases. However, it does describe types and patterns of behaviour associated with modern slavery in conflict in general terms.

Abstract

This report presents the findings of a study on modern slavery as a security concern at the level of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The report examines the intersections between modern slavery, human trafficking, and key agendas of the UNSC to support improved efforts to combat modern slavery in security contexts, improving advocacy, policies, and operations. The analysis covers the existing interests of the UNSC in addressing modern slavery in conflict in its key global agendas, focusing on women, peace and security, children and armed conflict, and protection of civilians in armed conflict. The study also provides a review of UNSC documents adopted or issued from 1990 to 2022, analysing the extent to which the UNSC has addressed slavery and related practices in dealing with peace and security issues. It identifies the current dynamics and opportunities for antislavery advocacy at the level of the UNSC, entry and leverage points, and other factors relevant to advancing antislavery in the global security agenda.

Contents

Executive summary

This report presents a summary of findings of a study on modern slavery as a security concern at the level of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The study examined the intersections between modern slavery, human trafficking, and key agendas of the UNSC. The report analyses the responses of the UNSC to modern slavery practices in armed conflicts, focusing on three specific agendas:

(1) Women, peace and security (WPS);
(2) Children and armed conflict (CAC); and
(3) Protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC).

The report is intended to support improved efforts to combat modern slavery in security contexts, improving advocacy, policies, and operations by identifying the current dynamics and opportunities for antislavery advocacy at the level of the UNSC.

What is modern slavery?

Modern slavery is an umbrella term used to describe a set of related exploitative practices and is not consistently defined at the international level. This report therefore refers to 'modern slavery practices' to encompass a range of different forms of exploitation—many of which have their own established definitions in international law—each of which have an identifiable connection to modern slavery. This includes slavery, servitude, institutions and practices similar to slavery, forced or compulsory labour, trafficking in persons, forced marriage, and the recruitment or use of children in armed conflict.[1]

Methods

This study combined three streams of evidence and analysis to examine the intersection between modern slavery and the UNSC. A comprehensive evidence review delivered analysis of a wide range of secondary sources evaluating the documents, policies, instruments, and initiatives of the UNSC. This was combined with analysis of 10,488 UNSC documents published from 1990-2022 and 10 semi-structured key informant interviews with representatives from international agencies.

Key findings

The nexus between modern slavery and conflict

❯ Armed conflict is one of the root causes of modern slavery

Instances of modern slavery increase in situations of armed conflict because of the collapse of the rule of law, breakdown of political, economic, and social structures, weakened law enforcement, increased levels of violence and militarism, difficulties in income generation, lack of basic facilities such as education and health, family breakdown, forced displacement, and insufficient humanitarian aid.

❯ Modern slavery can be both a direct and indirect result of armed conflict

People can become direct victims when armed forces, armed groups, and state actors are involved in modern slavery. Armed forces and groups strategically use modern slavery and human trafficking as a war tactic, recruitment tool, and/or revenue raising mechanism to finance their operations. Modern slavery can also be an indirect consequence of armed conflicts, allowing perpetrators to carry out their activities in a more favourable environment and exacerbating the vulnerability of individuals and communities.

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[1] The inclusion of a specified practice in the study does not represent a position on its inclusion within the umbrella of modern slavery as a developing concept at the international level. Rather, it reflects a connection drawn by relevant and authoritative stakeholders.

❯ **Areas affected by armed conflicts are used by traffickers as places of origin, transit, and destination**

Since modern slavery is not generally considered a priority issue by States involved in conflicts, traffickers benefit from the deterioration of rule of law, forced displacement, lack of humanitarian aid, and difficulties associated with the access to humanitarian needs, as well as social fragmentation and family breakdown.

❯ **Modern slavery in conflict settings involves different forms of exploitation**

In areas affected by armed conflict, people become particularly vulnerable to, and are specifically targeted by, traffickers, armed forces, and armed groups for use as combatants, sexual services, forced labour, forced marriages, domestic servitude, and to finance the conflict.

Modern slavery practices and the UNSC

❯ **The UNSC has an important role to play in addressing the nexus between modern slavery and conflict**

The nexus between modern slavery and armed conflict indicates that the UNSC should take initiatives in addressing modern slavery practices in situations of armed conflict. Further, there is growing recognition that the use of modern slavery practices in conflict and humanitarian settings is a security concern in itself. Given its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, this implies an active role for the UNSC in addressing modern slavery practices.

❯ **UNSC resolutions on modern slavery practices have perceived benefits for antislavery actors on the ground**

Addressing modern slavery in the UNSC's resolutions is perceived to be an important development in terms of the global recognition of the issue. Actors working on the ground rely on UNSC resolutions. Resolutions are invoked when entering engagement and dialogue with parties to armed conflicts. Further, the inclusion of modern slavery in UNSC resolutions ensures that these issues are not overlooked among other serious peace and security issues.

❯ **The UNSC has addressed modern slavery practices in a selection of documents**

A range of UNSC documents address the manifestation of modern slavery practices in conflict settings, including a 2015 Presidential Statement and two resolutions on human trafficking. The UNSC recognises that trafficking in conflict situations may amount to 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity'. These developments are welcomed by stakeholders as indicators of the UNSC's willingness to address modern slavery practices in armed conflict and to strengthen the international response to these practices.

❯ **The level of consideration of different modern slavery practices by the UNSC varies**

Across 10,488 documents adopted or issued by the UNSC from 1990 to 2022,[2] references to different modern slavery practices vary significantly in nature and intensity. Use of children in armed conflict, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking are the most extensively referenced practices. However, references to other modern slavery practices are limited; slavery, enslavement, sexual slavery, slave trade, forced labour, forced marriage, servitude, debt bondage, and the worst forms of child labour are seldom considered.

❯ **The implementation of UNSC policy with regard to modern slavery practices has been insufficient to meaningfully tackle the issue in conflict settings**

Although the inclusion of modern slavery practices in UNSC resolutions is a positive step forward, it is insufficient in the absence of implementation in practice. Interviewees frequently highlighted that resolutions are not backed up with resources, the lack of which impedes implementation on the ground. The

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[2] The review examined all documents available on the UNSC website for this period, including: UNSC Resolutions, Volumes of Resolutions, Presidential Statements, Notes by the President, Exchange of Letters, Reports of the Secretary-General, Annual Reports, Reports of Security Council Missions, and Press Statements.

UNSC is therefore called to give binding effect to resolutions, rather than using language of 'strongly condemning and expressing concerns' about modern slavery practices in situations of conflict.

› **Structural constraints are perceived to inhibit the efficacy of UNSC efforts to address modern slavery practices**

There is some degree of suspicion as to whether the UNSC is an appropriate platform to address modern slavery practices, with criticisms around both the composition of the UNSC and its mandate. This is seen to prevent the UNSC from developing a consistent policy and strategy to effectively deal with modern slavery practices. Critique has also been levied against the UNSC for failing to recognise modern slavery practices as a threat to international peace and security in their own right, missing an opportunity to develop an agenda to address these issues in both conflict and non-conflict settings.

Modern slavery practices in three key UNSC agendas

UNSC agendas on women, peace and security (WPS), children and armed conflict (CAC), and protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC) have significant implications for modern slavery. Yet, despite the clear interconnections, UNSC policy with regard to these connections is currently underdeveloped, leaving modern slavery practices largely unaddressed. Systematised, comprehensive, and coherent policy and practice to address modern slavery concerns in these agendas is therefore needed.

› **Women, peace and security (WPS)**

Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to modern slavery practices in conflict settings, and the exploitation they experience is significantly shaped by gender. In the WPS agenda, the UNSC has focused on the participation of women in peace processes and conflict resolution, as well as addressing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV). Thus, the WPS agenda has addressed issues interrelated and overlapping with modern slavery practices. However, it has not specifically or comprehensively addressed modern slavery practices as part of this agenda.

› **Children in armed conflict (CAC)**

Several violent acts and human rights violations committed against children in situations of conflict are closely linked with modern slavery practices, and children can be specifically vulnerable to certain forms of exploitation. The six grave violations against children in armed conflict identified by the UNSC include recruitment or use of children in armed forces or groups, which constitutes a modern slavery practice. Others are closely linked to modern slavery because acts constituting the violations may also amount to modern slavery practices, they may result from modern slavery practices, or increase vulnerability. Despite important implications for the protection of children from modern slavery in conflict, the UNSC has not substantially or comprehensively addressed modern slavery practices in the CAC agenda.

› **Protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC)**

Civilian populations living in conflict zones or affected by conflicts face heightened risk of modern slavery practices. Although the UNSC has not directly engaged with the modern slavery risk to civilians affected by armed conflicts in the PCAC agenda, it has paid significant attention to addressing the root causes of armed conflicts through promoting economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for, and protection of, human rights. While these measures also help build resilience against modern slavery practices, the lack of reference to modern slavery practices in the PCAC agenda has been criticised.

1. Introduction

Modern slavery practices increase in situations of armed conflict (UNODC, 2018). People affected by armed conflicts become particularly vulnerable to modern slavery in a variety of ways (UN Secretary-General, 2018). They are targeted by States' armed forces as well as non-state armed groups and terrorist groups, and exploited for a range of purposes, including forced recruitment, sexual exploitation, sexual slavery, forced marriages, forced labour, domestic servitude, slave trade, enslavement, and other forms of modern slavery (UN Secretary-General, 2016). Further, human traffickers benefit from conflicts, which facilitate their activities in an environment where the rule of law is weakened or collapsed and law enforcement does not effectively function (UNODC, 2018).

Under the United Nations Charter, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security (Security Council Report, 2019). There is a growing recognition that the use of modern slavery practices in armed conflicts is a security concern (UNODC, 2018). The close nexus between modern slavery practices and armed conflicts implies an active role for the UNSC in addressing modern slavery in conflict situations.

This report summarises the intersections between modern slavery and key agendas of the UNSC explored in depth in the Modern Slavery and the United Nations Security Council study, focusing on women, peace and security (WPS), children and armed conflict (CAC), and protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC).[3] It examines how modern slavery practices are addressed at the level of the UNSC and explores potential avenues for advocacy and action in this domain. In so doing, it advances global and regional knowledge at the leading edge of modern slavery and human security research, filling a gap in policy evidence and analysis. The report is divided into six substantive chapters, outlining the intersections between modern slavery practices and armed conflict, and how the UNSC has engaged with these generally and in the three specific agendas of focus.

The report provides an overview of key findings from the study, addressing:

- The nexus between modern slavery and armed conflict (section 4)
- Tools and mechanisms used by the UNSC to address modern slavery practices (section 5)
- References to modern slavery in UNSC documents from 1990-2022 (section 6)
- Modern slavery practices in the women, peace and security agenda (section 7)
- Modern slavery practices in the children and armed conflict agenda (section 8)
- Modern slavery practices in the protection of civilians in armed conflict agenda (section 9)
- Conclusions and recommendations for the UNSC (section 10)

[3] The full Modern Slavery and the United Nations Security Council report is available at [https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/research/beacons-of-excellence/rights-lab/resources/reports-and-briefings/reports-and-briefings-index.aspx]. The structure of the full report mirrors that of the summary report, providing greater depth and nuance on each of the substantive issued covered in this report.

Modern slavery and the United Nations Security Council

2. Methodology

This study is intended to support improved efforts to combat modern slavery in security contexts, advancing advocacy, policy, and operations at the level of the UNSC. The study provides a review of the key agendas of the UNSC on WPS, CAC, and PCAC, exploring implications for addressing modern slavery practices in the context of armed conflict and non-armed conflict settings.

The study combined four primary methods of data collection and analysis:

(1) Primary documentary analysis;
(2) Secondary literature review;
(3) In depth analysis of key instruments and reports; and
(4) Semi-structured key informant interviews.

2.1 Primary documentary analysis

All UNSC documents published from 1990 to 2022 and available on the UNSC's official website[4] were reviewed, coded, and analysed for references to modern slavery practices to identify the extent to which these practices were addressed by the UNSC in developing and implementing policies concerning international peace and security. It further aimed to analyse how different modern slavery practices have been addressed compared to other practices. A total of 10,488 UNSC documents were assessed, using NVivo 12 for mixed methods analysis.

2.2 Secondary literature review

A five-stage systematic evidence review was conducted to examine the intersections between modern slavery practices and the work of the UNSC. Review stages provided for an iterative and phased approach to the review, supplementing early-stage activities in light of learnings from later stages. Review was conducted in English and included academic and grey literature published from 2015-2022. Supplementary literature review also included editorials, news media, statements, and web resources.

2.3 In-depth analysis of key instruments and reports

In-depth analysis of various key instruments, documents, and reports was conducted to interrogate how the UNSC addressed modern slavery practices in key sources. This included key thematic resolutions of the UNSC, reports of the UN Secretary-General, and National Action Plans (NAPs) on WPS. Mixed methods analysis of sources was conducted in NVivo 12.

2.4 Semi-structured key informant interviews

Key informant interviews were conducted with ten UN system stakeholders with experience addressing modern slavery practices in settings of conflict and/or instability. Semi-structured interviews provided an overarching structure, while maintaining a level of flexibility tailored to each individual participant's responses. Participants were provided with interview transcripts and invited to make modifications. Once transcripts were finalised, the responses were assessed adopting a thematic analysis approach.

[4] The UNSC's documents can be found here: https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/security-council-documents

3. The nexus between modern slavery and armed conflict

Armed conflicts have a number of devastating impacts on society, and are considered one of the root causes of modern slavery and human trafficking (UNODC, 2018). Human trafficking and other forms of exploitation tend to increase in areas affected by armed conflicts because of 'the breakdown of political, economic and social structures, high levels of violence and increased militarism' (CEDAW, 2013, p. 10). People affected by armed conflicts are targeted by traffickers, armed groups, and armed forces to be used as combatants, to provide sexual services, to facilitate forced marriages, to exercise forced labour, or to finance the conflict. (de Liévana, 2019, p. 4).

Modern slavery practices can be a direct result of armed conflicts in situations where armed groups, armed forces, or state actors themselves are involved in trafficking and exploitation (see section 4.1). Further, modern slavery practices can also be indirectly linked to armed conflicts in situations where perpetrators exploit the conditions created by armed conflicts (Global Protection Cluster, 2020, p. 10) (see section 4.2).

Figure 1. Instances of modern slavery in armed conflicts (Smith, Datta and Bales, 2022)
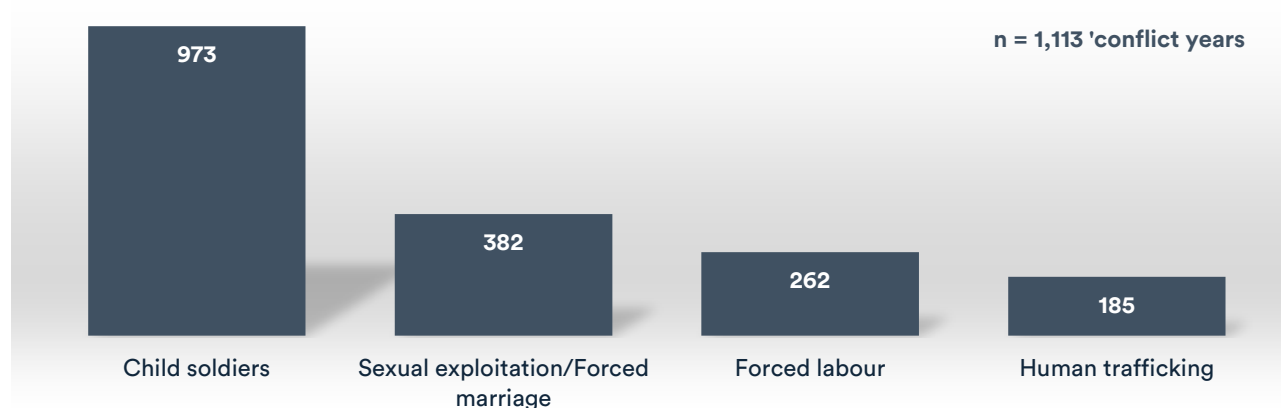
In the Contemporary Slavery in Armed Conflict (CSAC) database, Smith, Datta and Bales (2022) measure instances and types of slavery recorded in 171 armed conflicts from 1989 to 2016. Their analysis shows that 'contemporary slavery is a regular feature of armed conflict', found in 90% of modern wars. They report on both direct and indirect modern slavery practices arising out of conflict, but find direct exploitation by armed groups, armed forces, or state actors to be the most prevalent in records available. The most common modern slavery practice found in the dataset is the use of child soldiers, found in 87% of conflicts (see Figure 1). This is more than double the prevalence rate of the next most frequent modern slavery practice, sexual exploitation/forced marriage, which was found in 34% of conflicts. Forced labour was identified in almost a quarter of all conflicts (23%), while human trafficking was identified in 16% of conflicts.

"Contemporary slavery is a regular feature of armed conflict found in 90% of modern wars."

3.1 Direct impact: risk of modern slavery practices carried out by armed groups

Armed groups, armed forces, and state actors involved in conflict resort to modern slavery practices for different purposes. They sometimes use modern slavery practices as a 'war tactic'—to destabilise society or as part of a wider ideological strategy. Human trafficking is also used as a recruitment tool, as well as to finance conflicts. Modern slavery practices in armed conflicts are constituted of different forms of exploitation, including enslavement, use of child soldiers, sexual slavery, forced labour, forced and fraudulent recruitment into an armed group, and domestic servitude (Cockayne & Walker, 2016, p. 2).

3.1.1. Use of modern slavery practices as a 'tactic of war'

It is well-evidenced that modern slavery practices are used by armed groups involved in conflicts as 'a tactic of war', to 'destabilize and dislocate communities and undermine societal trust in the government' (Avdan & Omelicheva, 2021, p. 1580). Smith, Datta, and Bales found that 17% of armed conflicts from 1989-2016 included strategic enslavement (2022). Armed groups also sometimes use 'strategic enslavement' as a part of their larger strategy of genocide or ethnic cleansing (Smith, Datta, & Bales, 2022, p. 4). Strategic enslavement is usually imposed on a 'target group' that is considered to be eligible for both enslavement and extermination by the enslaving armed group (ibid). For example, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) applied strategic enslavement on the Yazidi minority to eliminate their ethnic identity.

The use of modern slavery practices as a tactic of war is not only characteristic to the practice of ISIL. Rather, such practices can be observed in the modus operandi of many armed groups who use modern slavery practices to spread terror, promote ideology, decimate communities, and exert control on populations (Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, n.d., p. 24). For example, Boko Haram used human trafficking and sexual violence to 'destroy the social fabric of society' in Nigeria (Attah, 2016, p. 388). Similarly, human trafficking and sexual violence were used by Al-Shabaab in Somalia and neighbouring countries to inflict terror on civilians (de Brouwer, de Volder, & Paulussen, 2020). Similar patterns were also observed in Myanmar, where the massive scale of rape and other forms of sexual violence against women and girls was found to be part of a deliberate strategy to intimidate, terrorise, or punish a civilian population (UN Human Rights Council, 2018).

Both State forces and non-state armed groups use systematic sexual violence as a tactic of war. In these cases, 'such incidents are not random or isolated but integral to the operations, ideology and economic strategy of a range of State actors and non-state armed groups' (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 3).

3.1.2. Use of modern slavery practices as a recruitment tool

Modern slavery practices can be the direct consequence of an armed conflict when used by armed groups or armed forces as a recruitment tool to increase their military power (UNODC, 2018, p. 12). Armed groups and armed forces use modern slavery practices both to forcibly recruit new fighters and to attract individuals to participate through the prospect of receiving sex slaves as a reward (Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, n.d., p. 28).

In the first case, the impact of armed conflict is 'immediate and direct', since forcibly recruited fighters are the victims of modern slavery practices (ibid). For example, more than 1,600 children from January to December 2017 were abducted by Al-Shabaab and forcibly recruited as child soldiers (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 2). When forcibly recruited, people are indoctrinated and trained to fight in armed groups or forces (Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, n.d., p. 28). Although recruitment disproportionately affects boys, girls are also recruited and used in armed conflicts (see further section 7.2.1).

Armed groups also use modern slavery practices as a means to attract individuals through the promises of women and girls as sex slaves or brides. In this case, women and girls are usually offered to prospective and active fighters as slaves to be used as servants or wives (Binetti, 2015). The prospect of receiving sex slaves as a reward is used to encourage new fighters to join armed groups (Byman, 2016). For example, ISIL used this as part of a propaganda campaign to lure male fighters to Iraq and Syria (Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, n.d., p. 28).

3.1.3. Use of modern slavery practices to finance conflict

Modern slavery practices are used by armed groups and armed forces (including state actors) to finance their operations during armed conflicts. The use of modern slavery practices to finance conflicts may take different forms. This includes the sale of enslaved people, as well as use of forced labour in a variety of contexts.

The most obvious case of modern slavery practices used to generate income for armed actors is the sale of persons as slaves. For example, both ISIL and Boko Haram engaged in trading in women and girls (UN Secretary-General, 2016, p. 4). It was evidenced that the women and girls abducted by ISIL were sold in 'slave markets' (Human Rights Watch, 2016), and sometimes passed among multiple ISIL members (Graham-Harrison, 2017). It was also found that some ISIL fighters used the Internet to engage in slave trade, conducting online slave auctions via encrypted communication applications (i.e., Telegraph), which were used to circulate photos of women and girls held as slaves, with details of their marital status, age, price, and location (UN Human Rights Council, 2016, p. 12). In addition to the sales of women and girls, ISIL also requested ransom money from victims'

families to free them (Financial Action Task Force, 2018, p. 15). Ransom payments made by the Yazidi community to ISIL in 2014 amounted to $35 million and $45 million (UN Secretary-General, 2016, p. 8).

ISIL also forced men and children to work in agriculture and on construction projects (ibid). The US State Department found that ISIL and criminal gangs in Iraq forced displaced children to work in organised begging rings (2015, p. 190). The maintenance of essential infrastructure (for instance electricity plants and oil installations) and the provision of essential services (for instance education and healthcare) were also services in which ISIL forced qualified civilians to work. Similarly, Boko Haram also used children as beggars to finance their operations (Cockayne & Walker, 2016, p. 8). Forced labour is also often employed in prisons and detention centres in conflict contexts. In Syria, for instance, this has been documented in the case of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (SNHR, 2022).

Armed groups and armed forces may raise revenue through taxes imposed on perpetrators actively engaging in modern slavery practices within their territory. Although evidence is limited to support such link, the Financial Action Task Force indicated that it is highly likely that armed groups make financial profits from modern slavery activities by allowing or facilitating modern slavery practices in their territories (Financial Action Task Force, 2018, p. 16). This was supported by the Secretary-General, noting that armed groups and criminal organisations made both 'direct and indirect' profits from human trafficking activities in Libya (UN Secretary-General, 2016, p. 5).

3.2 Indirect impact: increased risk of modern slavery practices during and after conflict

Armed conflicts create a favourable environment for perpetrators to carry out modern slavery activities. Deterioration in the rule of law creates conditions of impunity for perpetrators, while people become more vulnerable due to forced displacement, the lack of humanitarian aid or difficulties associated with the access to humanitarian needs, social fragmentation, and family breakdown (UNODC, 2018, p. 5).

Perpetrators actively use areas affected by conflicts as places of origin, transit, and destination to carry out modern slavery activities (CEDAW, 2013, p. 10). They benefit from weakened state structures and rule of law due to the increased level of instability, insecurity, and economic desperation (Counter Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, n.d., p. 15). People living in areas affected by armed conflicts are stripped of the rights and protections they usually enjoy during peacetime (UNODC, 2018, p. 5). Interviewees underlined that modern slavery practices are not considered priority issues by States involved in conflicts because they tend to devote their resources to defence and fighting (Interviewee #5).

Referring to the lack of capacity and resources in Sudan due to conflict, an interviewee stated that 'there's very little victim assistance and again, very limited criminal justice capacity, very little institutional capacity to deal with human trafficking', impeding efforts in fight trafficking (Interviewee #7). Boko Haram utilised the lack of rule of law in Niger and developed a 'very specific strategy' to recruit young men and women who were abducted and trafficked (Interviewee #6). Likewise, human traffickers and organised criminal networks took advantage of the situation in Libya, where they expanded their trafficking operations (UN Secretary-General, 2016, p. 5).

"Combatting modern slavery is not considered a priority by states involved in conflict because they tend to devote their resources to defence and fighting"

In addition to creating an environment of impunity for perpetrators, conflicts also create opportunity for exploitation as populations become extremely vulnerable due to instability. It becomes extremely difficult for people affected by armed conflicts to seek opportunities for income generation and to maintain their access to essential services such as healthcare and education (Interviewee #3). This creates an environment where people in conflict zones resort to 'negative coping strategies' to survive, which increases the risk of exploitation and trafficking (ibid). Sustainable provision of humanitarian aid and access to essential services is therefore critical in making people in conflict settings more resilient to exploitation (UNODC, 2022).

Armed conflict is one of the main causes of large scale internal and cross-border movement of populations. The UN Refugee Agency noted that in 2021, there were more than 89.3 million people who were forcibly displaced due to persecution, conflict, violence, human rights violations, or events seriously disturbing public order (UN Refugee Agency, 2021, p. 2). These displaced populations face high risk of modern slavery practices (de Liévana, 2019, p. 4). Limited access to education, financial resources, health care services, and income generation opportunities results in displaced people becoming the target of traffickers who deceive them into exploitative situations through false promises of safe migration routes and employment (UNODC, 2018, p. 6). Children who are displaced or separated from their families are specifically targeted by traffickers (ibid).

4. Addressing modern slavery at the UNSC

The UNSC has tackled various modern slavery practices as security issues, although seldom deals with these collectively or comprehensively.

Table 1. Timeline of key UNSC actions relevant to modern slavery practices

Date	Action
February 2015	Resolution 2199 (2015) - Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts
October 2015	Resolution 2240 (2015) - Maintenance of international peace and security
October 2015	Resolution 2242 (2015) - Women and peace and security
December 2015	Resolution 2253 (2015) - Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts
December 2015	Thematic debate on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict
December 2015	Presidential Statement on Human Trafficking
December 2016	Resolution 2331 (2016) on Trafficking in Persons in Armed Conflict
March 2017	Open Debate on Maintenance of International Peace and Security - Forced Labour, Slavery, and Other Similar Practices
June 2017	Resolution 2359 (2017) - Peace and security in Africa
July 2017	Resolution 2368 (2017) - Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts
September 2017	Resolution 2374 (2017) - The situation in Mali
September 2017	Resolution 2379 (2017) - Threats to international peace and security
November 2017	Open Debate was held at the UNSC under the theme of Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Trafficking of Persons in Conflict Situations
October 2017	Resolution 2380 (2017) - Maintenance of international peace and security
November 2017	Resolution 2388 (2017) - On Trafficking in Persons in Armed Conflict
July 2018	Resolution 2427 (2018) - Children and armed conflict

4.1 UNSC debates on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict and the Presidential Statement

The UNSC has held three key thematic debates relevant to modern slavery practices—two on trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict, and one focused on forced labour, slavery, and other similar practices. The first thematic debate on trafficking in persons was also followed by a Presidential Statement on the same topic—the only Presidential Statement focused specifically and exclusively on any modern slavery practice.

4.1.1.   The first thematic debate on trafficking in persons in armed conflict

In December 2015, the UNSC held its first thematic debate on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict. In this debate, the UNSC explicitly addressed the nexus between human trafficking and conflicts for the first time (Cockayne & Walker, 2016, p. 2). The inclusion of trafficking in the UNSC's agenda was triggered by enslavement practices imposed on women and girls for the purposes of sexual slavery and the use of children as fighters and suicide bombers by ISIL and Boko Haram (Wheeler, 2016, p. 6). This thematic debate played an important role in 'awareness raising amongst the members of the Security Council and the other governments participating… because there were a number of strong messages that came across' (Interviewee #6).

4.1.2.   The Presidential Statement on human trafficking

The first thematic debate. played an important role in the formal introduction of human trafficking on the agenda of the UNSC (United Nations, 2016, p. 23). It was followed by a Presidential Statement recognising the link between human trafficking and armed conflicts (UN Security Council, 2015). The Presidential Statement condemned 'in the strongest terms reported instances of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict' and noted that 'trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity' (UN Security Council, 2015).

It also highlighted that trafficking may manifest in forms of sexual and gender-based violence imposed by terrorist and armed groups as part of their strategic objectives (Cockayne & Walker, 2016, p. 2).

The Presidential Statement was considered to signal a 'genuine willingness' of the UNSC to address human trafficking in situations of conflict and to strengthen the international response to modern slavery practices (Wheeler, 2016, p. 7). It set out measures for UN Member States and UN agencies to tackle trafficking and other forms of exploitation in situations of conflict (United Nations, 2016, p. 23). It further emphasised that international law enforcement cooperation is required to investigate and prosecute cases of human trafficking (UN Security Council, 2015). Member States were urged to reinforce their political commitment to, and strengthen their implementation of, applicable legal obligations to criminalise, prevent, and combat human trafficking (ibid). The Presidential Statement set out measures ranging from victim identification and assistance mechanisms, to improving practices to hold perpetrators accountable (ibid). Significantly, Member States were also encouraged to ensure their public procurement and supply chains are not contributing to human trafficking in situations of armed conflict (Cockayne & Walker, 2016, p. 2).

4.1.3. The thematic debate on forced labour, slavery, and other similar practices

In March 2017, the UNSC held another debate on the Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Forced Labour, Slavery, and Other Similar Practices (UN Security Council, 2017). Prior to the open debate, the United Kingdom (UK) issued a Concept Note requesting Member States address the issue of how the UNSC can better tackle forced labour and human trafficking and promote multilateral cooperation and ensure accountability in their statements (United Kingdom, 2017). A total of 77 statements were delivered at the debate, addressing many different issues and calling for stronger cooperation between States, early victim identification procedures, and placing victims at the centre of solutions to human trafficking and forced labour (UN Security Council, 2017). The main theme of the debate was a discussion of the impact of armed conflict on civilian populations, including the increased risk of human trafficking, forced labour, sexual exploitation, and forced recruitment (PeaceWomen, 2017). Further, the representative of Brazil specifically emphasised that Member States should address the root causes of conflict to tackle human trafficking in situations of conflict (UN Security Council, 2017).

Some speakers at the debate raised concerns as to whether the UNSC had the legitimacy to hold this debate, since they considered that human trafficking and forced labour were not relevant to its security agenda (PeaceWomen, 2017). This was specifically raised by the representatives of the Russian Federation and Belarus (ibid). However, as discussed in Section 4 above, it is well-documented that there is a strong nexus between modern slavery practices and armed conflict.

4.1.4. The second thematic debate on trafficking in persons in armed conflict

In November 2017, another open debate was held at the UNSC under the theme of Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Trafficking of Persons in Conflict Situations (UN Security Council, 2017). A total of 73 statements were delivered at the debate, addressing the need to disrupt financial flows to armed groups, improve victim identification programmes, create safe migration routes, decriminalise acts committed by victims of trafficking, and strengthen normative frameworks designed to prevent and suppress trafficking (PeaceWomen, 2017). Specifically, the situation of individuals auctioned as slaves in Libya and the use of children as child soldiers in areas affected by armed conflicts were addressed (UN Security Council, 2017). It was pointed out that the offences of human trafficking committed in situations of conflict may amount to 'war crimes' and 'crimes against humanity' (ibid). The statements delivered at the debate emphasised the need for actions to hold perpetrators accountable—to investigate, disrupt, and dismantle human trafficking networks (PeaceWomen, 2017). Several statements also addressed the necessity of shared responsibility and human rights-based approaches to effectively deal with human trafficking (UN Security Council, 2017). For example, the representative of the European Union explicitly emphasised that Member States should develop a victim-centred and human rights-based policy framework to fight human trafficking (ibid).

4.2 UNSC resolutions addressing modern slavery practices

UNSC resolutions are described as formal expressions of the opinion or will of UN organs. Resolutions are official documents accepted by fifteen members of the UNSC and adopted by a vote of UNSC members. Resolutions are passed if nine or more members vote for them, and they are not vetoed by any of the five permanent members (namely, China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, and USA) (UNRCCA, 2020). Whether the UNSC's resolutions are binding on all Member States is contested. Some claim that resolutions become binding only when they are adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations (Kittrie, 2016). Therefore, they argue that resolutions adopted outside the scope of Chapter VII are not binding on Member States. However, others argue that the binding nature of a resolution depends on whether the UNSC indicates its intent to create a legally binding obligation in a specific provision of a resolution (Joyner, 2017). It is outside the scope of this report to discuss whether and when a resolution becomes binding on Member States. However, the importance of resolutions being adopted under Chapter VII to avoid this contestation was highlighted by one interviewee:

> Expressing concerns doesn't mean anything in terms of legal effects. They have to pass resolutions, legally binding resolutions under Chapter VII, obliging Member States or peacekeeping missions to address human trafficking. And I think that's necessary. So not simply adapting the resolutions under Chapter 6, but Chapter 7 is quite important (Interviewee #7).

Half of the twelve UNSC resolutions directly relevant to modern slavery practices were adopted under Chapter VII, while the other half were not. The two thematic resolutions on trafficking in person in situations of armed conflict (2331 and 2388) were not passed under Chapter VII.

The UNSC has adopted two specific resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict—Resolution 2331 (2016) and Resolution 2388 (2017). Both resolutions acknowledge the nexus between modern slavery practices and armed conflict, identifying trafficking in persons as an international peace and security issue in these contexts. They highlight that trafficking interacts with other organised criminal activities and note that trafficking can exacerbate conflict and instability. Both resolutions also highlight financial investigations as a key mechanism in efforts to address trafficking in conflict settings.

4.2.1.   Resolution 2331 (2016)

Resolution 2331 (2016) marked the first time the UNSC formally recognised the nexus between human trafficking and armed conflicts (UN Security Council, 2016). In 2331, the UNSC linked human trafficking to the issue of maintenance of international peace and security when committed under certain circumstances, engaging the responsibility of the UNSC under Article 24 of the UN Charter (de Liévana & Chinkin, 2020). It condemns 'in the strongest terms all instances of trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflicts' and underlines that 'trafficking in persons undermines the rule of law and contributes to other forms of transnational organized crime, which can exacerbate conflict and foster insecurity and instability and undermine development' (ibid, Article 1). It further recognises that 'certain acts or offences associated with trafficking in persons in the context of armed conflict may constitute war crimes' (ibid, Preamble).

Resolution 2331 notes that human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict can be used for different forms of exploitation (UN Security Council, 2016). It further recognises that certain terrorist and armed groups use human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence as part of their strategic objectives and ideologies, and as a tactic to increase their finances and power through recruitment and the destruction of communities (UN Security Council, 2016). It specifically noted that human trafficking and sexual and gender-based violence are used by terrorist and armed groups to:

- Incentivise recruitment;
- Support financing through the sale, trade, and trafficking of women, girls, and boys;
- Destroy, punish, subjugate, or control communities;
- Displace populations from strategically important zones;
- Extract information for intelligence purposes from male and female detainees;
- Advance ideology which includes the suppression of women's rights; and
- Use religious justification to codify and institutionalise sexual slavery and exert control over women's reproduction (ibid, article 8).

The text of Resolution 2331 highlights that terrorist and armed groups engage with human trafficking of women and girls in areas affected by conflict to increase finance (de Liévana & Chinkin, 2020). As such, the UNSC urged the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to conduct an analysis of financial flows associated with trafficking in

persons that finances terrorism as part of their activities (UN Security Council, 2016). Member States were also encouraged to develop the expertise of their Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) to analyse cases of human trafficking associated with terrorist and armed groups' financing (ibid, Article 5) and to help identify and detect suspicious financial activity related to human trafficking that finances terrorism and armed conflicts (ibid, Article 6).

4.2.2. Resolution 2388 (2017)

In November 2017, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2388 (2017)—the second resolution on trafficking in person in situations of conflict (UN Security Council, 2017). Condemning human trafficking by terrorist groups, including ISIS and several other terrorist groups in Africa, the UNSC underlined that people affected by armed conflict become more vulnerable to, and are at great risk of, being subjected to human trafficking (ibid, Preamble). Resolution 2388 reiterates 'the connection between trafficking in persons, sexual violence and terrorism and other organized criminal activities', and notes that human trafficking by terrorist groups 'exacerbate conflict and instability or intensify its impact on civilian populations' (ibid). Like Resolution 2331, 2388 also emphasised that human trafficking is used to generate income for terrorist groups and may constitute war crimes in the context of armed conflict (ibid, Preamble).

In Resolution 2388, the UNSC urged Member States to fight against human trafficking in armed conflict by taking into account its connection with money-laundering, corruption, migrant smuggling, and other organised crimes, and encouraged them to conduct financial investigations to identify and analyse financial intelligence involved in human trafficking in armed conflict (ibid, Article 6). Member states were also urged to assess the situation of individuals released from captivity of armed groups to identify if they were victims of human trafficking (ibid, Article 17). Further, the UNSC affirmed that victims of human trafficking should not be punished due to unlawful activities they committed as a direct result of having been subjected to trafficking (ibid). This has relevance in cases involving the recruitment of minors from abroad by groups such as ISIL, including for repatriation.

4.2.3. Criticisms of the UNSC approach in resolutions 2331 and 2388

While marking important steps in the development of UNSC efforts to address modern slavery practices, resolutions 2331 and 2388 have been criticised for taking a narrow approach focused only on conflict-related trafficking (de Liévana, 2019, p. 6). The UNSC has focused on trafficking as a threat to international peace and security, and has failed to develop a human rights, women's right, or development based framework to respond to the phenomenon (ibid). This has been considered a missed opportunity to address the root causes of human trafficking, which create the vulnerability of people to be trafficked in conflict-related contexts and beyond (ibid, p.7).

The UNSC was further criticised for creating a hierarchy of victims of human trafficking (de Liévana & Chinkin, 2020). This is because Resolution 2331 affirms that victims of human trafficking and sexual violence, when committed by terrorist groups, should be considered as victims of terrorism so that they can be eligible for official support, recognition, and redress available to victims of terrorism (UN Security Council, 2016). However, such support and recognition were not envisaged for victims trafficked by non-terrorist groups in conflict-related and out of conflict-related contexts.

> "The UNSC has been criticised for taking a narrow approach focused only on conflict-related trafficking, and for failing to develop a human rights, women's rights, or development based anti-trafficking framework."

4.2.4. Other salient resolutions addressing modern slavery practices

Beyond resolutions 2331 and 2388, the UNSC has addressed modern slavery practices in resolutions dealing with conflicts in various regions. For example, both Resolution 2240 (2015) and Resolution 2380 (2017) were intended to disrupt organised criminal enterprises engaged in migrant smuggling and human trafficking in Libya and condemned all acts of migrant smuggling and human trafficking into, through, and from Libyan territory and off the coast of Libya (UN Security Council, 2015; UN Security Council, 2017). The UNSC stated that migrant smuggling and human trafficking undermine stabilisation processes in Libya and endanger people's lives and emphasised that addressing migrant smuggling and human trafficking requires 'a coordinated, multidimensional approach with States of origin, of transit, and of destination' to deter human traffickers (ibid).

Both Resolution 2199 (2015) and Resolution 2253 (2015) adopted in 2015 condemned 'in the strongest terms abductions of women and children' and expressed 'outrage at their exploitation and abuse, including rape, sexual abuse, forced marriage, committed by ISIL, ANF, and other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaida' (UN Security Council, 2015; UN Security Council, 2015). In these resolutions, the UNSC encouraged Member States and non-state actors to provide evidence to the UNSC on situations where human trafficking in armed conflicts supports perpetrators financially (ibid, Preamble).

In Resolution 2242 (2015) adopted in October 2015, the UNSC pointed out that sexual and gender-based violence is used as 'as a tactic of terrorism, and an instrument to increase their power through supporting financing, recruitment, and the destruction of communities' (UN Security Council, 2015). It stated that when used as a method or tactic of war, or as a part of a widespread or systematic attack against civilian populations, sexual violence 'can significantly exacerbate situations of armed conflict and may impede the restoration of international peace and security' (ibid, Preamble).

> "Impunity of perpetrators can cause a culture of corruption, increasing trafficking and other criminal activities and further exacerbating instability and insecurity."

Adopted in June 2017, Resolution 2359 (2017) expressed concerns over the transnational dimension of the terrorist threat in the Sahel region, emphasising serious challenges posed by transnational organised criminals involved in migrant smuggling and human trafficking, as well as their links with terrorism (UN Security Council, 2017). In Resolution 2374 (2017) adopted in September 2017, the UNSC emphasised that impunity of perpetrators can cause a culture of corruption, which increases human trafficking and other criminal activities leading to further instability and insecurity (UN Security Council, 2017).

In Resolution 2368 (2017) adopted in July 2017, the UNSC condemned all acts of human trafficking and invited the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General on sexual violence in conflict and on children and armed conflict to brief the Committee to provide relevant information including the names of individuals involved in the trafficking in persons who may meet the Committee's designation criteria (UN Security Council, 2017). The UNSC also indicated that it would consider targeted sanctions for individuals and entities associated with ISIL or Al-Qaida involved in human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict and in sexual violence in conflict (ibid, Article 15). Similarly, Resolution 2379 (2017) adopted in September 2017 condemned ISIL committing kidnapping, enslavement, sale into or otherwise forced marriage, human trafficking, rape, sexual slavery and other forms of sexual violence, and recruitment and use of children (UN Security Council, 2017).

Resolution 2427 (2018) adopted in July 2018 referred to human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law committed by armed groups, including abuses and violations such as mass abductions and sexual and gender-based violence, particularly targeting girls (UN Security Council, 2018). In this resolution, the UNSC pointed out the link between abductions, recruitment, sexual violence, and human trafficking, as well as the vulnerability of children in armed conflict to human trafficking (ibid, 18). Resolution 2427 (2018) urged relevant parts of the UN system to work to address this issue (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 3).

4.2.5. The impact of UNSC resolutions

Despite questions over their binding character, interviewees in this study highlighted that the UNSC resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict are important tools to identify the issue and promote their recognition through conversations and debates because more attention is paid to an issue once it is on the agenda of the UNSC. Interviewee #3 specifically noted that resolutions make it 'much easier to hold a conversation' on the ground because they can be used as a reference point to initiate engagement. Another interviewee stated that resolutions help create a framework to bring Member States closer to harmonisation in addressing human trafficking, so that 'everyone speaks the same language' (Interviewee #2). This interviewee highlighted that they use resolutions as their 'main speaking narrative framework when I'm introducing something to African Member States' in terms of facilitating investigations and providing trainings on counter-trafficking.

> "UNSC resolutions are important tools for addressing modern slavery practices in conflict, as more attention is paid to an issue once it is on the UNSC's agenda."

Addressing human trafficking in the UNSC's resolutions provides added value to the recognition of these issues, and enables the actors working on the ground to develop responses and discuss these issues at policy, advocacy, and operational levels:

> If we want a more sustainable response and change, it's always good to have the possibility to lean on international instruments or something that is also authoritative because it gives recognition to the issue (Interviewee #3).

Similarly, another interviewee stated that the inclusion of modern slavery practices in resolutions is a 'good trend' (Interviewee #5). Given the sensitive nature of issues associated with safety and security, the UNSC's recognition of human trafficking in situations of armed conflict ensures that these issues are not overlooked among other serious peace and security issues (Interviewee #3). Further, resolutions have been important tools in persuading domestic authorities to develop national responses to human trafficking (ibid). Resolutions are considered key to initiating engagement and dialogue with parties to armed conflicts, as they are considered forms of 'backing from global level' (ibid).

Several interviewees noted that the UNSC's resolutions on trafficking in persons are considered a turning point in antislavery advocacy in situations of armed conflict. This is because modern slavery practices used to be addressed within the context of humanitarian response as 'a life saving measure' (Interviewee #3). With the adoption of specific resolutions on human trafficking, people working on the ground were provided with guidance to ensure a more tailored response to modern slavery practices in armed conflicts. For example, an interviewee working to facilitate investigations and provide trainings on counter-trafficking for Member States stated:

> …we will use the resolutions as a guideline or framework for our introductory conversations. We would use them to guide any alignments that we may want to suggest along the lines of changing policy within the REC [regional economic community] context, which is done to Member States. It frames our narratives firstly, but then we also make use of them as reference points when we are using them to pitch to donors. That strengthens our position a lot (Interviewee #2).

It was also highlighted that the UNSC's recognition of human trafficking in armed conflicts was helpful to improve a system-wide approach. Interviewee #3 stated that 'I think if it hadn't made it in 2017, we probably wouldn't have been able to defend counter-trafficking in emergencies and in armed conflict'.

4.2.6. The limits of UNSC resolutions on the ground

Although addressing modern slavery practices in UNSC resolutions is welcomed, several interviewees also highlighted their limitations. For example, one interviewee stated that resolutions do not provide specific guidance and are not used as 'the first reference' in holding conversations and discussions with Member States in terms of developing antislavery actions (Interviewee #1). It was further stated that the scope of actions identified in the resolutions are limited to armed conflicts, although modern slavery practices can also emerge and result from other contexts, which eventually restricts the potential wider application of these resolutions (ibid).

The inclusion of modern slavery practices in the UNSC agenda is seen as a positive step forward, but insufficient in the absence of implementation in practice (Interviewee #5). It was noted that resolutions should be given binding legal effect rather than using the language of 'strongly condemning' or 'expressing concerns', which does not have any binding nature in practice (ibid). Another interviewee noted that resolutions place 'too many asks' on Member States, considering that there are a range of measures specified, most of which are interrelated (Interviewee #3). It was suggested that the UNSC should focus on particular themes to reduce the ask of States. It was also highlighted that where different agendas address similar or related issues, they should be integrated 'to speak with one voice' (ibid).

"The inclusion of modern slavery practices in the UNSC agenda is seen as a positive step forward, but insufficient in the absence of effective implementation in practice."

The challenges associated with implementation of resolutions were emphasised by interviewees. For example, one interviewee observed that domestic authorities working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo did not engage with the UNSC's resolutions because of 'the complete chaos in the rule of law and systems' (Interviewee #1). Similar observations were made in Yemen, where parties to armed conflicts did not consider any aspect of resolutions (ibid). In this regard, several interviewees highlighted that the effective implementation of resolutions depends on the willingness of the parties to armed conflicts. It was highlighted that if a party to an armed conflict has nothing to lose by not applying the resolutions, it becomes particularly difficult to engage with them.

The implementation of resolutions requires sufficient resourcing, which can pose significant challenges in contexts facing significant resource limitations and competing priorities. As one interviewee observed:

> In order for states and other actors to be able to do that, resources must be devoted for that. But that's easier said than done. As I said, in a time of armed conflict, states and agencies have different priorities, and modern slavery may not be one. But I do challenge them to make it a priority. I think that's most important (Interviewee #5).

In these contexts, modern slavery practices are often not seen as a high priority concern, which is also impacted by practical challenges where the rule of law has degraded and police and armed forces lack investigative capacity to address trafficking (interviewees #3 and #5).

Several interviewees observed that effective legal mechanisms specifically focusing on modern slavery practices do not exist in many countries affected by armed conflicts. Referring to Sudan, one interviewee stated that modern slavery practices are dealt with under different pieces of legislation, since there was no trafficking in persons legislation at the time (Interviewee #7). Further, the domestic authorities lack the capacity, infrastructure, and institutional structure to effectively fight modern slavery practices even where relevant law or policy does exist (ibid). It was summarised as follows: 'if we just come up with a policy with no advocacy or resources, it just remains a good policy but cannot be implemented' (ibid).

4.3 Human trafficking and UNSC sanctions

UN sanctions are used as a last resort to address massive human rights violations and to support peace efforts, as well as to demobilise armed groups (UN Security Council, n.d.). The UNSC is empowered to consider sanctions under Article 41 of Chapter VII (Honda, 2017). Sanctions may take a number of different forms, from comprehensive economic and trade sanctions to more targeted measures such as arms embargoes, travel bans, and financial or commodity restrictions (Carisch, Rickard-Martin, & Meister, 2017). The UNSC has recently started using the sanctions mechanism to combat human trafficking in situations of conflict. The UNSC has noted in several resolutions that it would consider targeted sanctions for individuals and entities involved in human trafficking in areas affected by armed conflict (UN Security Council, 2017). It has integrated the issue of human trafficking into the work of relevant sanctions committees (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 13).

"Use of UNSC sanctions against traffickers is welcome. However, more is needed to effectively deal with the worst offenders."

On 7 June 2018, the Security Council Committee of the UNSC, established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya, placed six individuals on a sanctions list for human trafficking (United Nations, 2018). Travel bans and asset freezes were imposed on these individuals who were found to be the main perpetrators of human trafficking and migrant smuggling in Libya (Vorrath, 2018, p. 1). The imposition of sanctions on these individuals demonstrated the increasing willingness of the UNSC to pay attention to the issue of human trafficking in situations of conflict.

The use of the sanctions mechanism for perpetrators of human trafficking was welcomed by interviewees. However, it was also noted that the imposition of sanctions did not mean anything because of the lack of implementation. One interviewee stated that sanctioning these six individual traffickers was 'on one side, a strong measure, but it was more like shame and blame' (Interviewee #3). However, it was underlined that more is needed to effectively deal with the worst offenders of modern slavery practices. Therefore, one interviewee suggested that the sanctions mechanism should be improved with the introduction of a global arrest warrant to enable Member States to arrest these offenders due to their involvement in human trafficking (Interviewee #3).

4.4 The possibility of UNSC referral to the ICC

Modern slavery practices committed by armed groups in situations of conflict may also amount to war crimes, crimes against humanity, or genocide. These violations are often described as international crimes and are within the subject-matter jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court (ICC).[5] Where there is evidence that modern slavery practices constitute genocide, a crime against humanity, or war crime committed in the territory of a State party to the Rome Statute or by a national of a State party, the ICC can prosecute these offences. However, the ICC does not have jurisdiction over the territories of States who are not party to the Rome Statute (Galand,

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[5] Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Article 5.

2019, p. 2). The jurisdiction of the ICC may, however, be extended through a referral by the UNSC acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations to the Prosecutor of the ICC (ibid).[6]

In 2014, a Commission of Inquiry appointed by the UN Human Rights Council found that there were reasonable grounds to believe that 'crimes against humanity have been committed in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, pursuant to policies established at the highest level of the State' (UN Human Rights Council, 2014, p. 14). These crimes included enslavement, among many other serious crimes (ibid). The UN General Assembly submitted the report of the Commission of Inquiry to the UNSC, encouraging it to consider 'referral of the situation in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to the International Criminal Court' (UN General Assembly, 2015). It also requested the UNSC consider imposing 'effective targeted sanctions against those who appear to be most responsible for acts that the commission has said may constitute crimes against humanity' (ibid). However, the UNSC did not consider the possibility of sanctions or ICC referral, with 11 votes for, two against, and two abstentions (Cockayne, 2015, p. 36).

4.5 Is the UNSC an appropriate platform for addressing modern slavery practices?

The UNSC has been increasingly engaging with modern slavery practices in the context of armed conflicts. So far, the UNSC has used several tools to address this issue. However, it has been queried whether the UNSC is an appropriate platform to address modern slavery practices. Some argue that modern slavery practices are not within the scope of the work of UNSC, while others claim that the very structure and composition of the UNSC prevent it from effectively dealing with these practices. There is also some suspicion about the added value of the UNSC in this space, as highlighted by one interviewee stating that 'African Member States don't like the name of UN Security Council. They always think that there's a benefit that only benefits the West and that it is not really something that they can tag on' (Interviewee #2).

Given the clear nexus between modern slavery practices and armed conflicts (addressed in section 4), the UNSC can and should play a role in addressing these practices in situations of armed conflict. This can be extended to other contexts if modern slavery practices are considered, in themselves, as a threat to international peace and security. This view was articulated by one interviewee, arguing that modern slavery practices should not only be addressed in the context of armed conflict per se, but should also be considered as a threat to international peace and security. (Interviewee #5).

Several interviewees noted that the engagement of the UNSC with modern slavery in practice depends on how the five permanent members behave. Given that permanent members have a veto power, the composition of the UNSC may generate resistance to widening the scope of concern to address modern slavery practices more effectively or outside the context of armed conflicts (Interviewee #6). For example, one interviewee underlined that there has not been UNSC involvement in Ukraine, due to the responses from China and Russia (Interviewee #5). There is a significant risk of modern slavery practices caused by the conflict in Ukraine (see section 3.2). However, this has not been addressed at the level of the UNSC. The structural limitations of the UNSC were addressed by one interviewee as follows:

> I'm not sure the Security Council can be much assistance to be honest, because it only deals with threats to international peace and security. So, it is not capable of addressing human trafficking outside of those contexts. If you have seen in the case of Ukraine, the Security Council is not functioning properly because of Russia being a permanent member. So other forums such as the Human Rights Council are taking a more key role. But obviously, the Human Rights Council doesn't pass any legally binding resolutions obliging states to do something... So, I think there's attraction in using Security Council under certain circumstances, but, again, I don't have any particular recommendations other than that the Security Council should be debating issues of modern slavery in their work more frequently. (Interviewee #5).

On the other hand, the UNSC has more readily engaged with conflicts in African countries, as observed by one interviewee: 'the Security Council is inherently political ... Wherever there is a conflict in Africa, the Security Council should be traditionally involved' (Interviewee #5). This inconsistent approach raises question about the legitimacy of the UNSC more broadly. Yet, on the whole, stakeholders considered the UNSC to occupy an important position within the international system of great relevance for addressing modern slavery practices in contexts of conflict, instability, and insecurity. Stakeholders therefore advocated for a more coherent, comprehensive, systematic, and effective approach to addressing modern slavery practices by the UNSC.

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[6] ibid, Article 13(b).

5. Modern slavery practices in UNSC documents

While the coherence and comprehensiveness of the UNSC's approach to modern slavery practices has been criticised, the extent of reference to these practices across UNSC documents is notable. This demonstrates not only the high relevance of modern slavery practices within the UNSC agenda, but also the engagement of the UNSC with the topic across contexts. While the level of depth in consideration of modern slavery practices by the UNSC has substantial shortcomings, the breadth of reference to the topic makes it clear that the issue is interwoven throughout the UNSC agenda. Yet, shortcomings are still evident in the integration of modern slavery considerations across the UNSC's portfolio—the extent of reference does not appear proportionate to the scale and extent of the problem, and consideration instead appears to be selective rather than systematic.

The UNSC produces a range of documents as part of its operations, ranging from resolutions (with the highest level of force) to press statements. From 1990-2022, the UNSC published 10,488 documents. Of these, one in every seven documents makes some reference to at least one modern slavery practice (14.5%) (see Figure 2). References are most common in Annual Reports (58.1% of which contain reference to at least one modern slavery practice) and Volumes of Resolutions (53.8% of which contain reference). Secretary-General Reports and Reports of Security Council Missions are also relatively likely to include reference to modern slavery practices, with around a third of these documents featuring at least one reference to a modern slavery practice. On the other hand, modern slavery practices are almost never considered in Press Statements or Notes by the President, and seldom appear in Exchanges of Letters or Presidential Statements.
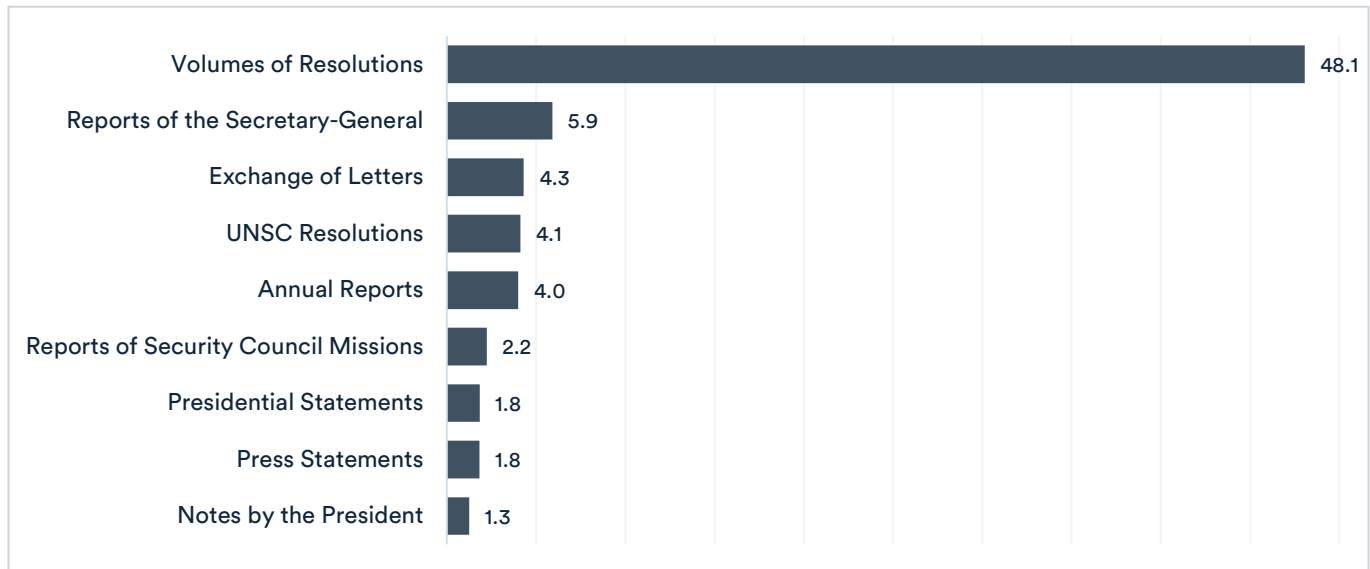
Figure 2. Proportion of UNSC documents referencing modern slavery practices, 1990–2022
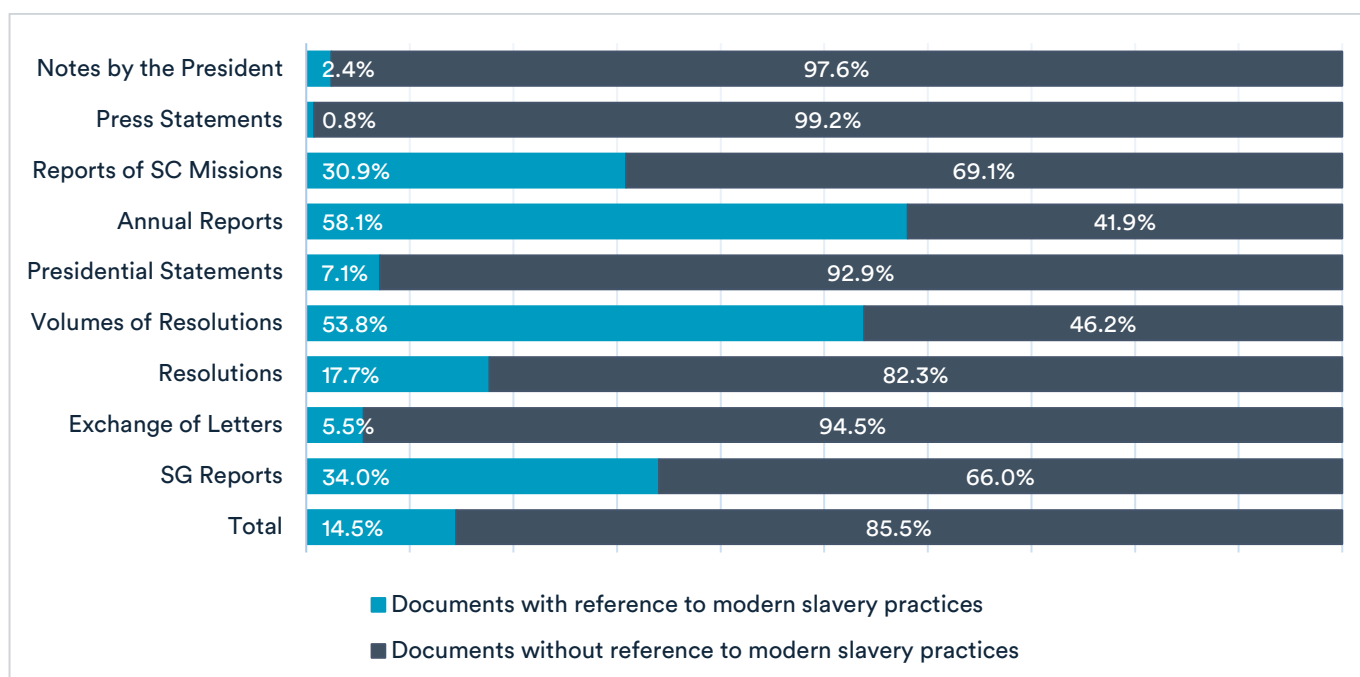
The highest intensity of references to modern slavery practices (average number of references per document referencing modern slavery practices) were found in Volumes of Resolutions, which included an average of 48.1 references per document (see Figure 3). This is a result of the fact that Volumes of Resolutions compile a large number of documents into one consolidated document, and are thus longer than other document types and cover a wide range of issues in a single collated document. Reports of the Secretary-General overall contain the highest number of references to modern slavery practices, and have the second highest intensity score with an average of 5.9 references per document. This demonstrates that although Annual Reports are more likely to reference modern slavery practices at all, Reports of the Secretary-General are more likely to reference modern slavery practices more extensively. On the other hand, Notes by the President have the lowest intensity score—1.3 references per document containing reference to modern slavery practices.
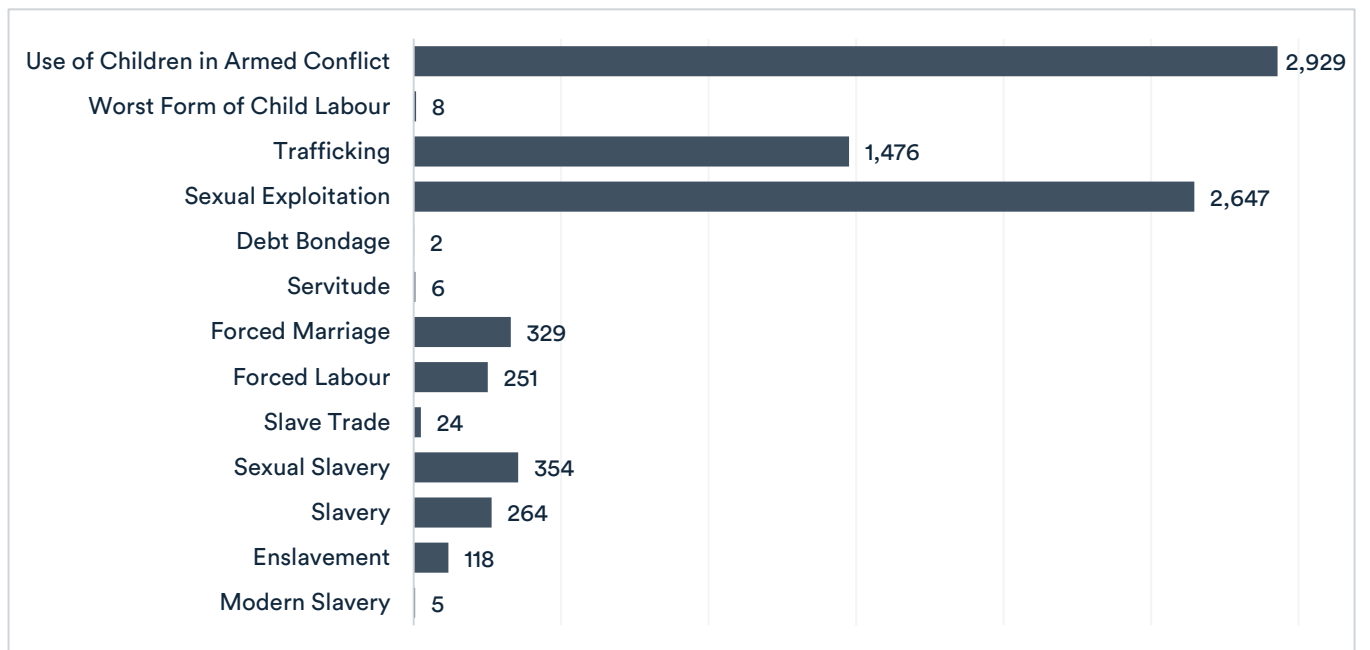
Figure 3. Intensity of reference to modern slavery practices in UNSC documents, 1990-2022

Category	Value
Volumes of Resolutions	48.1
Reports of the Secretary-General	5.9
Exchange of Letters	4.3
UNSC Resolutions	4.1
Annual Reports	4.0
Reports of Security Council Missions	2.2
Presidential Statements	1.8
Press Statements	1.8
Notes by the President	1.3

While the UNSC has referred to a wide range of modern slavery practices in its documents, specific forms of modern slavery are significantly more likely to be considered by the UNSC than others. Use of children in armed conflict, sexual exploitation, and trafficking are relatively well represented in UNSC documents, identifying these as the core frames for consideration of modern slavery in the agenda of the UNSC. Across a total of 8,413 references to modern slavery practices across UNSC documents published from 1990-2022, more than a third (35% - 2,929 references) related to use of children in armed conflict (see Figure 4). Sexual exploitation made up 31% of references (2,647 references), and trafficking 18% (1,476). Collectively, these three modern slavery practices represented 84% of all references to modern slavery practices by the UNSC over more than thirty years. Despite their ubiquity in conflict settings, other modern slavery practices are seldom considered in UNSC documents.

Figure 4. References to different modern slavery practices in UNSC documents, 1990-2022

Category	Value
Use of Children in Armed Conflict	2,929
Worst Form of Child Labour	8
Trafficking	1,476
Sexual Exploitation	2,647
Debt Bondage	2
Servitude	6
Forced Marriage	329
Forced Labour	251
Slave Trade	24
Sexual Slavery	354
Slavery	264
Enslavement	118
Modern Slavery	5

Specific modern slavery practices referenced by the UNSC also varied by the type of document, with some practices appearing more (or less) frequently in some document types compared to others. The dominance of certain modern slavery practices across the corpus of UNSC documents as a whole was therefore also influenced by document type, as some documents were more prolific than others. For instance, the predominance of use of children in armed conflict as a modern slavery practice considered by the UNSC is largely driven by references in Secretary-General Reports—within which 46% of all references to modern slavery practices relate to use of children in armed conflict (see Figure 5).

As 70% of all references to modern slavery practices in UNSC documents are found in Secretary-General Reports, the high representation of this modern slavery practice in this document type results in its high representation overall. In other document types—such as Presidential Statements, Volumes of Resolutions, and Resolutions, and Exchange of Letters—use of children in armed conflict represents a relatively small proportion of total references to modern slavery practices.

Figure 5. References to different modern slavery practices by UNSC document type, 1990–2022
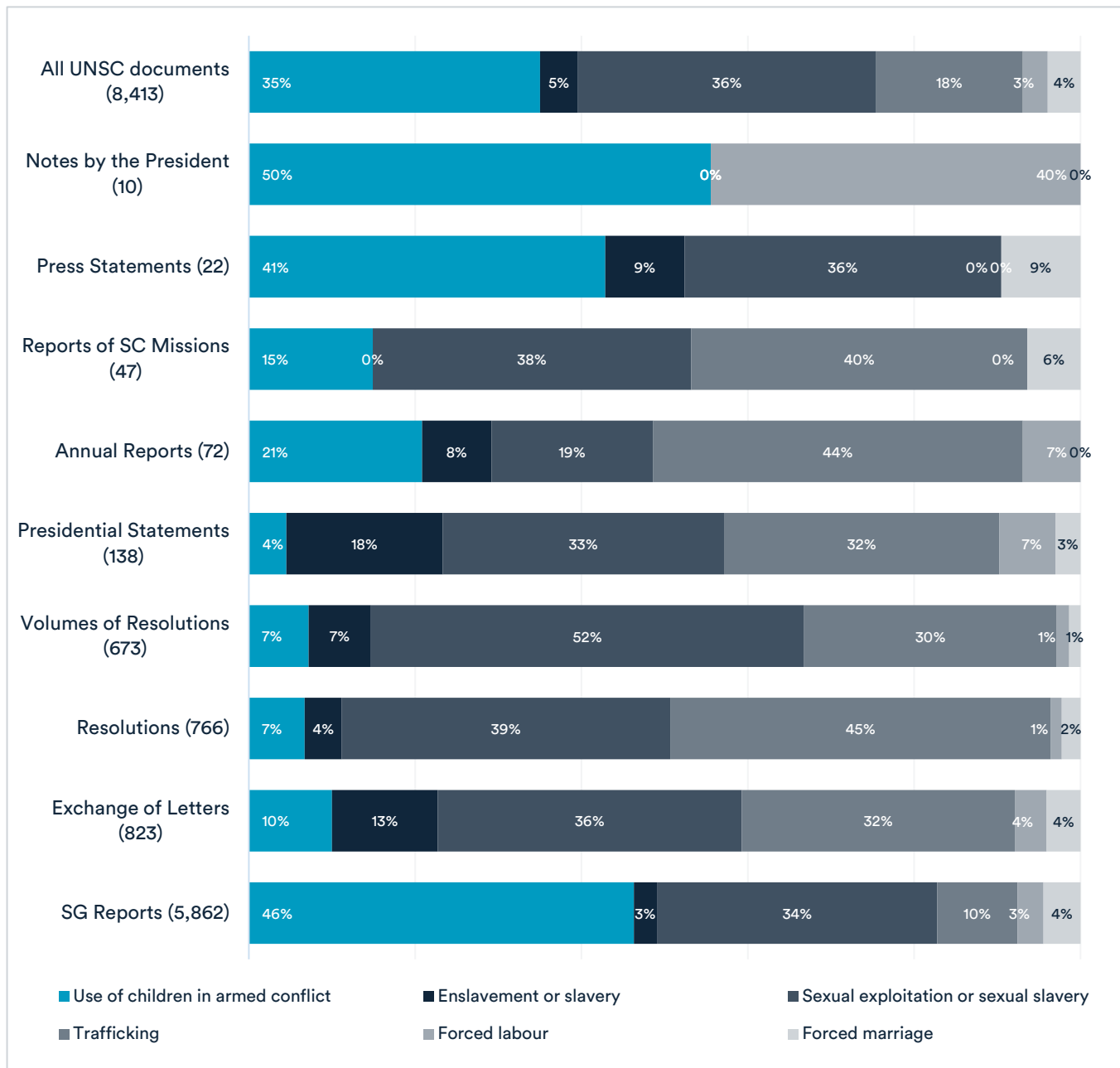
Enslavement or slavery were more likely to be considered in Presidential Statements than other document types, with 18% of references to modern slavery practices in these documents relating to enslavement or sexual slavery. Sexual exploitation or sexual slavery were most dominant in Volumes of Resolutions, within which 52% of references to modern slavery practices related to these exploitation types. Forced marriage, on the other hand, was most likely to be considered in Press Statements.

6. Modern slavery and women, peace and security (WPS)

Since 2000, the UNSC has adopted ten resolutions on WPS, recognising the unique and disproportionate impact of conflicts on women and girls, and requiring their full participation in peace negotiations and reconstruction efforts in conflict and post-conflict situations. The UNSC's resolutions on WPS cover a wide range of issues in the context of peace and security, addressing operationalisation of WPS, development of indicators and measuring outcomes, recognition of the use of sexual violence as a war tactic, development of strategies to tackle sexual violence in armed conflict and ensuring access to justice for sexual violence victims (Hamilton, Naam, & Shepherd, 2020). The WPS agenda addresses modern slavery practices predominantly through the lenses of conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

6.1 The impact of armed conflict on women and girls

Armed conflicts disproportionately affect women and girls, and the experience of modern slavery practices in conflict settings is often deeply gendered. This is evident in both modern slavery practices resulting directly from armed conflict and in those arising as an indirect consequence of conflict and instability. This manifests in myriad ways. In the security context, the most often emphasised modern slavery practices are sexual exploitation and sexual slavery, that may be widespread in various forms in conflict settings. However, other modern slavery practices in conflict settings also have gendered dynamics.

> "The experience of modern slavery practices in conflict settings is often deeply gendered."

Both within and beyond conflict settings, some modern slavery practices are disproportionately experienced by women and girls. For example, women and girls are targeted for sexual exploitation, labour exploitation in domestic service, and forced marriage (de Liévana & Chinkin, 2020, p. 194). The ILO and Walk Free estimate that 78% of victims of forced commercial sexual exploitation and 68% of forced marriage victims are female (ILO, Walk Free, & IOM, 2022, p. 17). UNODC data shows that 91% of identified victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation are female—64% women and 27% girls (UNODC, 2023, p. 33). UNODC also found that women suffer greater violence at the hands of traffickers, being subjected to physical or extreme violence at the hands of traffickers at a rate three times higher than males (ibid, p xii). These forms of exploitation are exacerbated by conflict—Smith, Datta and Bales found evidence of sexual exploitation and/or forced marriage in 32% of modern wars, making this the second most commonly recorded form of contemporary slavery assessed in the CSAC database (2022, p. 5).

Women and girls become particularly vulnerable to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) in situations of conflict. These abuses may constitute modern slavery practices, depending on the nature of the violence. Women and girls are abducted by armed groups for the purpose of sexual exploitation, forced marriage and forced pregnancy, sexual slavery, and sexual violence (UN Secretary-General, 2022). Women and girls are also used as 'sex slaves' or 'wages of war' in situations where they are considered ineligible for marriage with fighters (UN Secretary-General, 2017, p. 4). In addition to experiencing violations perpetrated by parties to conflict, women and girls have been further victimised by the abuses of some officials working in UN peacekeeping missions.

6.2 Addressing conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV)

Conflict-related sexual violence (CRSV) is considered by the UNSC as part of its WPS agenda because women and girls disproportionately suffer from sexual violence in situations of conflict due to pre-existing patterns of gender inequality and discrimination (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2022, p. 5). CRSV encompasses incidents or patterns of sexual violence in situations of conflict or post-conflict situations (Department of Peace Operations, 2020, p. 93). As defined by the Secretary-General, CRSV has significant intersections with modern slavery in the context of armed conflicts, because it may be constituted of sexual slavery, forced prostitution, forced marriage, or human trafficking (UN Secretary-General, 2022, p. 4). Each of these forms of CRSV fall within the umbrella of modern slavery as conceived in this study. However, not all forms of CRSV are modern slavery practices. CRSV is perpetrated by both state and non-state armed groups (UN Secretary-General, 2022).

To address CRSV, the UNSC has mandated UN field missions prevent and respond to incidences of CRSV by establishing monitoring, analysis, and reporting arrangements. Specifically, UN field missions are encouraged to:

- Engage parties to the conflict to obtain concrete time-bound commitments that comprehensively address CRSV; and
- Support the implementation of these commitments.

UN field missions are also expected to deal with CRSV, even in cases where they are not explicitly mandated. UN field missions should respond to CRSV on the basis of their human rights, child protection, protection of civilians, women, peace and security, justice, security sector reform and prevention mandates (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2022, p. 4).

To promote effective coordination to address and prevent CRSV, the United Nations Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict network (UN Action) was established in 2007 to unify efforts across UN system entities (UN Action against Sexual Violence in Conflict, n.d.). Considered 'a critical joint UN system-wide initiative to guide advocacy, knowledge-building, resource mobilisation, and joint programming around sexual violence in conflict' (Stop Rape Now, 2021), UN Action is the critical interagency coordination forum to address CRSV in the UNSC Resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1960 (2010), 2106 (2013), 2331 (2016), and 2467 (2019). UN Action is funded completely from voluntary, extra-budgetary contributions by donors to the Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Multi-Partner Trust Fund (CRSV-MPTF). Through this fund, 53 projects were supported in seventeen conflict-affected countries between 2009 and 2021 (UN Secretary-General, 2022, p. 3).

6.3 Addressing sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeeping missions

The risk of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) by UN peacekeeping missions presents its own issue with respect to the impact of armed conflict on women and girls in connection with modern slavery practices. Although SEA is itself a form of CRSV, it has a distinctive character—SEA is distinguished from other forms of CRSV on the basis of the official position of the perpetrator such as military, police, or civilian member of an international peacekeeping mission (Independent Commission for Aid Impact, 2020, p. 6). While not all SEA constitutes modern slavery practices, sexual exploitation in particular has a clear overlap, particularly with human trafficking, which includes sexual exploitation among its elements.

The UNSC has addressed SEA in five out of ten resolutions on WPS, mandating the enforcement of 'zero tolerance' on SEA (see Table 13). UN peacekeeping personnel are required to refrain from engaging in any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes (UN Department of Peace Operations, 2022, p. 113). The UNSC also requires that troop and police contributing countries should take appropriate preventative and investigative actions to ensure full accountability in the occurrence of sexual exploitation by UN peacekeeping missions (ibid). Resolution 2272 specifically directed the UN Secretary-General to replace military or police units from any contributing country that failed to hold perpetrators accountable for SEA by their personnel (Westendorf, 2017, p. 6). This led to the Republic of Congo withdrawing its military peacekeepers from the Central African Republic in 2017 because of a UN review finding allegations of SEA against its personnel (Whalan, 2017). This was considered a direct impact of the UNSC's Resolution 2272 (2016) on the ground in dealing with SEA by UN peacekeeping missions.

In addition to addressing SEA in WPS resolutions, the UNSC also addressed this issue in a Presidential Statement, emphasising that SEA by UN peacekeepers is 'unacceptable' (UN Security Council, 2015). The Presidential Statement affirmed a zero tolerance policy on all forms of SEA (ibid).

6.4 National Actions Plans on the WPS agenda

Member States hold the primary responsibility for the implementation of the UNSC's resolutions on WPS. In practice, Member States are expected to develop their own National Action Plans (NAPs) to effectively implement WPS resolutions in their domestic jurisdictions. NAPs are considered 'a strategic tool for policymakers to operationalise and translate the international mandates of the WPS agenda into the domestic context' (Hamilton, Naam, & Shepherd, 2020, p. 1). Member States develop and adopt NAPs as a means to 'effectively translate this international framework [on WPS] into actionable changes at the national and local level' (Jacevic, 2018, p. 274). In this respect, NAPs are 'national-level strategy documents' detailing countries' approaches, objectives, activities, and course of action to localise the implementation of the WPS agenda (Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, n.d). NAPs aim to address human rights violations against women and girls in conflict situations, prevent armed conflict and violence and their disproportionate impacts on women and girls, and ensure meaningful and effective participation of women in peace and security (ibid).

In 2005, Denmark became the first country adopting a NAP for the implementation of Resolution 1325 (2000). Since then, 103 UN Member States (52%) and 8 regional and subregional organisations have adopted NAPs to implement resolutions on WPS. Of the 103 NAPs adopted by UN Member States, 70 NAPs (72%) recognise the specific role of civil society organisations in implementation of the WPS agenda at domestic and local levels, and 35 NAPs (36%) provide an allocated budget for implementation (ibid).

The primary focus of NAPs on WPS is to develop strategies and activities to implement the four pillars of the UNSC's resolutions on WPS: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. In this study, all 111 NAPs on WPS adopted by UN member states and regional and subregional organisations were reviewed for explicit reference to modern slavery practices. Of the 111 NAPs examined, 85 (77%) included references to one or more modern slavery practices.

Figure 6. Geographic distribution of NAPs on WPS including references to one or more modern slavery practices
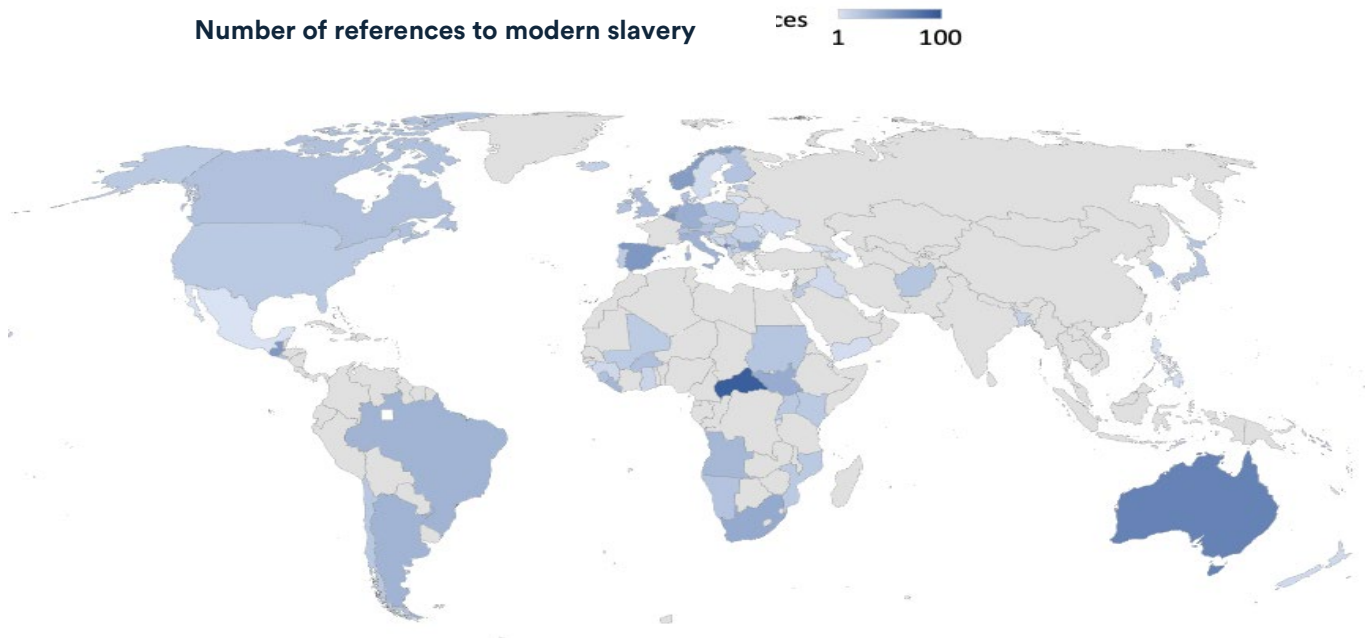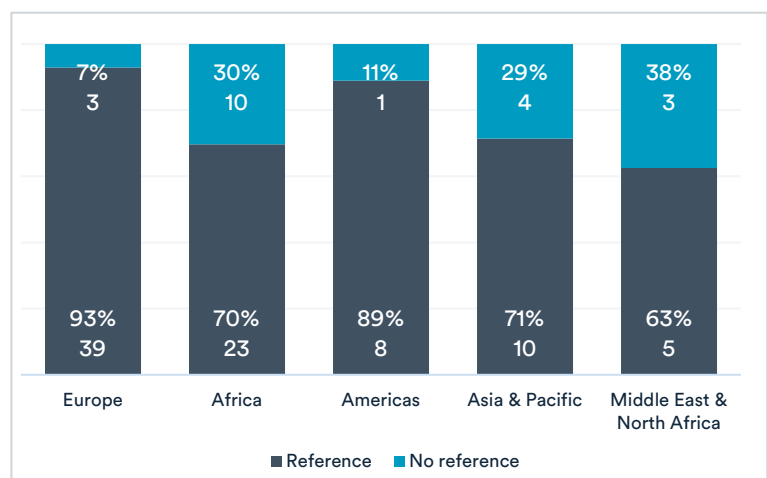
Number of references to modern slavery

Figure 6 shows the geographic distribution of NAPs on WPS including references to one or more modern slavery practices. NAPs are most concentrated in Europe and Africa, with 42 and 33 NAPs respectively. European NAPs were the most likely to reference modern slavery practices of all regions, with 93% of NAPs considering modern slavery at least once (see Figure 7). Only three of the 42 NAPs adopted by countries and regional and subregional organisations in Europe (Armenia, France, and Latvia) did not include any references to one or more modern slavery practices. The proportion of NAPs referencing modern slavery practices was also high in the Americas, with 89% of NAPs in this region including at least one reference. A total of nine NAPs were adopted in the Americas and only one (Paraguay) did not include any references to modern slavery practices. NAPs in the Middle East and North Africa were the least likely to reference modern slavery practices, with 63% of eight NAPs adopted in this region making any reference to modern slavery practices.[7]

Sexual exploitation was the most commonly referenced modern slavery practice across NAPs (see Figure 8). Of the 85 NAPs on WPS including explicit references to modern slavery practices, 81 (95%) referenced sexual exploitation. This was followed by human trafficking (referenced in 65 NAPs – 76% of NAPs referencing modern slavery practices). Other modern slavery practices were less commonly referenced.

Figure 7. Number of NAPs with reference to modern slavery practices by geographic region

	Europe	Africa	Americas	Asia & Pacific	Middle East & North Africa
No reference	7% / 3	30% / 10	11% / 1	29% / 4	38% / 3
Reference	93% / 39	70% / 23	89% / 8	71% / 10	63% / 5

■ Reference   ■ No reference

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[7] Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and the League of Arab States NAPs make no reference to modern slavery practices.

The number and intensity of references to different modern slavery practices in NAPs on WPS also vary significantly. For the most part, modern slavery practices were only referenced a small number of times in NAPs—demonstrating relatively limited engagement with the subject matter. For all but three modern slavery practices (sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and slave- and slavery-like practices), the intensity score (the average number of times a practice was referenced in instruments that included any reference) was below three (see Table 2).

Not only was sexual exploitation the modern slavery practice referenced in the highest number of NAPs, it was also the most extensively considered in NAPs, with an intensity score of 15.8 (see Table 2) and 1,280 references across the full corpus of NAPs. This intensity score was skewed, however, by a very high number of references to sexual exploitation in a few NAPs. The NAP for the Central African Republic contained the most extensive references to the practice, reflecting 93 references. This was followed by the NAPs for Guatemala, Belgium, Norway, Netherlands, Spain, and Brazil, each containing more than 30 references to sexual exploitation. On the other hand, 30 NAPs included 10 or fewer references to sexual exploitation while the NAPs for Mexico, Djibouti, Philippines and Burundi did not contain any references to the practice.

Although modern slavery practices were referenced in 85 NAPs on WPS, none of these NAPs provided a concrete action plan addressing modern slavery and human trafficking. In most of the cases, the NAPs recognised the existence of modern slavery practices, and/or their unique impact on women and girls in armed conflict situations in passing references.

Where modern slavery practices were dealt with in some detail, they were included in wider action plans focusing on preventing sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) against women and girls in armed conflict.

In relation to the substantive consideration of modern slavery practices, the Belgian NAP on WPS was more promising. It included promises to make the fight against human trafficking a priority in the national security plan, ensure assistance and aid to the victims of human trafficking in Belgium, and integrate human trafficking into bilateral agreements on police cooperation. Similarly, the NAP for South Africa envisaged the development of cyber safety measures to prevent human trafficking, and the introduction of special protective measures against trafficking in persons and the trafficking and sale of body parts. Montenegro aimed to strengthen professional and institutional capacities to address various forms of modern slavery, including illegal marriages, begging, and labour exploitation. The NAP for Malta also included a similar goal to provide trainings on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse for all relevant personnel.

The Bulgarian NAP specifically addressed the need for the inclusion of combatting human trafficking in the WPS agenda and required the training of participants in missions and operations abroad on various aspects of trafficking in women for the purpose of sexual or other exploitation. It prioritised the protection of women and girls in conflict-affected areas from sexual exploitation and SGBV. Similarly, the NAP for El Salvador sought to

Figure 8. Number of NAPs referencing different modern slavery practices

Practice	Number
Sexual exploitation	1280
Human trafficking	459
Forced marriage	39
Sexual slavery	27
Children in armed conflict	26
Slavery	10
Forced labour	8
Modern slavery	5
Slave- and slavery-like practices	4
Enslavement	3
Servitude	3
Slave trade	1
Worst forms of child labour	1
Forced recruitment	1

Table 2. Average intensity of references to different modern slavery practices

Sexual exploitation	15.8
Human trafficking	7.1
Forced marriage	2.0
Sexual slavery	1.3
Children in armed conflict	1.9
Slavery	1.3
Forced labour	1.1
Modern slavery	2.5
Slave and slavery-like practices	4.0
Enslavement	1.0
Servitude	1.0
Slave trade	1.0
Worst forms of child labour	1.0
Forced recruitment	1.0

"While many NAPs deal with modern slavery practices, none provide a concrete action plan addressing modern slavery and human trafficking."

ensure the protection of women and girls from sexual exploitation in armed conflict, as well as providing assistance to migrant women and girls who are victims of human trafficking. The Argentinian NAP addressed the specific vulnerability of women and girls in refugee and internally displaced person camps. It highlighted the prohibition of the use of children in armed conflict under its domestic law. The use of children in armed conflict was also addressed by the NAP for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, aiming to reduce the rate of recruitment of child soldiers (young girls and boys) within armed factions.

The Australian NAP provides a good example of the substantive consideration of modern slavery issues, including steps to address modern slavery by specifically providing support to partner countries to strengthen their legislative frameworks to prevent human trafficking, modern slavery practices, forced labour, and forced marriage. The Irish NAP was also unique in the sense that it ensured support to civil society organisations to combat human trafficking, as well as aiming to establish a formal identification process for victims of human trafficking in liaison with critical stakeholders.

6.5 The importance of women's participation in peace processes

The gendered risks of modern slavery practices on women and girls do not end when conflict ceases (de Liévana & Chinkin, 2020, p. 198). Women and children remain vulnerable to human trafficking in situations of economic chaos and the destruction of social structures in conflict and post-conflict settings (ibid). Against this background, women's participation in peace processes becomes important in designing and implementing post-conflict social and economic orders that mitigate modern slavery risks. The UNSC has addressed women's participation in peace processes in six out of ten resolutions on WPS (Resolution 1325 (2000), Resolution 1820 (2008), Resolution 1889 (2009), Resolution 2122 (2013), Resolution 2242 (2015) and Resolution 2493 (2019)).

Women's participation in peace processes is of specific relevance to modern slavery practices for several reasons:

> "Women's participation in peace processes is highly relevant for addressing modern slavery practices. However, the connection between women's participation and combatting modern slavery is seldom considered."

(1) Relief and recovery require efforts to address modern slavery violations perpetrated disproportionately against women during conflict. Women's participation in peace processes may therefore improve the extent, nature, and quality of efforts to respond to modern slavery practices that occurred during the conflict.

(2) Humanitarian support within the context of peace processes requires consideration of the specific humanitarian needs of women and girls—needs which can place them at further risk of modern slavery practices. Women's involvement in peace processes may provide a platform for more effective responses to address the humanitarian needs of women and girls, and thus help prevent further modern slavery practices.

(3) Women's participation in peace processes can result in different issues being addressed, including in particular issues related to modern slavery practices such as forced marriage, SGBV, and gender inequality.

(4) Women's participation in peace processes is seen to increase the likelihood of a peace agreement being reached, and contribute to more durable and long lasting solutions (O'Reilly, 2015). As modern slavery practices thrive in situations of conflict and instability, this can be seen as an element of prevention.

(5) Modern slavery practices in conflict settings often intersect with wider patterns of gender discrimination and inequality. Women's participation in peace processes is seen as a measure towards addressing gender inequality, and therefore tackling key drivers of modern slavery practices against women and girls.

Although women's participation in peace processes is thus highly relevant to both addressing past modern slavery practices and to preventing and responding to potential future violations, the extent to which this is specifically considered an issue relevant to modern slavery is limited.

7. Modern slavery and children and armed conflict (CAC)

The UNSC initiated its children and armed conflict agenda in 1999. Since 1999, the UNSC has consistently engaged with the impact of armed conflict on children and reaffirmed that the situation of children affected by armed conflict should be considered a peace and security issue.[8] The inclusion of children and armed conflict in the UNSC's agenda is welcomed as 'a vital step towards protecting children in situations of armed conflict from some of the most egregious violations of their rights'.[9] As of September 2022, the UNSC has adopted 11 resolutions on children and armed conflict to address the specific needs and vulnerability of children in situations of armed conflict.

UNSC resolutions on children and armed conflict do not deal with modern slavery or human trafficking in situations of conflict in a substantive manner. However, they do deal with related practices and make reference to various modern slavery practices. For instance, in Resolution 1539 (2004), the UNSC made specific references to human trafficking, forced labour, and all forms of slavery committed against children in armed conflict. Under article 1 of Resolution 1539 (2004), the UNSC:

> Strongly condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to armed conflict in violation of international obligations applicable to them, killing and maiming of children, rape and other sexual violence mostly committed against girls, abduction and forced displacement, denial of humanitarian access to children, attacks against schools and hospitals as well as trafficking, forced labour and all forms of slavery and all other violations and abuses committed against children affected by armed conflict.

Subsequent resolutions of the UNSC on children and armed conflict did not engage specifically and substantively with the risk of modern slavery, human trafficking, or other forms of exploitation against children in armed conflict. However, some violent acts and human rights violations committed against children in situations of armed conflict are closely linked with modern slavery.

7.1 The impact of armed conflict on children

In 1996, Graça Machel presented a UNICEF Report, *The Impact of Armed Conflict upon Children,* to the UN General Assembly.[10] The Graça Machel report demonstrated for the first time the impact of armed conflict on children, highlighting the scale and scope of how children's rights were violated in armed conflict (ibid). The report showed how children were recruited, used, displaced, exploited, and sexually abused by armed groups. Smith, Datta, and Bales reveal the use of child soldiers to be the most pervasive modern slavery practice evident in modern wars, occurring in 87% of armed conflicts (2022, p. 5). The Secretary-General's report on Children Affected by Grave Violations found that 7,622 children were verified as having been recruited or used in armed conflict in 2022, 1,166 were verified as victims of sexual violence, and 3,985 children were verified as having been abducted (Secretary-General, 2022).

"Children face severe risks of modern slavery practices in conflict settings--perpetrated by armed groups, states, organised criminal actors, and their own family members."

One interviewee underlined that children continue to be at risk despite the increasing awareness and recognition by saying that:

> I think it's on one side, I see that a lot of governments recognise the need to protect children, irrespective of status in any type of context. At the same time, experience shows that children are still continuing to be at risk (Interviewee #3).

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[8] Office of Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, A Mandate to Protect Children Affected by Conflict, (nd), available at: < https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/20-01006-Protecting-Children-in-Conflict-Brochure-Final.pdf).
[9] Watchlist, Action plans to prevent and end violations against children, April 2013, available at: < https://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/FINAL-Discussion-Paper-Action-Plans.pdf>
[10] Graça Machel, The Impact of Armed Conflict upon Children, A/51/306/1996, 26 August 1996.

In addition to the risk of modern slavery practices perpetrated by armed groups and organised criminal actors, children are sometimes put in danger by their own parents adopting negative coping strategies in conflicts, which may be damaging for children. For example, one interviewee highlighted that there were a lot of child marriages of Syrian children living in Turkey since parents thought that they would protect the honour of their girls 'without realising that actually, they were really going directly into sexual exploitation and abuse' (Interviewee #3).

7.2 Grave violations against children in armed conflict

The UN Secretary-General addresses six grave violations in its reports on children and armed conflict. These six grave violations are:

(1) Killing and maiming;
(2) Recruitment or use of children in armed forces or groups;
(3) Rape or other grave sexual violence;
(4) Abduction of children;
(5) Attacks on schools or hospitals; and
(6) Denial of humanitarian access for children.

Except for denial of humanitarian access for children, all other grave violations against children trigger the listing of parties to armed conflicts in the annexes to annual reports of the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (UNODC, n.d.). Further, these grave violations against children require the activation of Monitoring and Reporting Mechanisms in countries listed in annexes in the UN Secretary-General's annual reports on children and armed conflict (Global Protection Cluster, 2020, p. 53).

Neither modern slavery nor human trafficking are listed as one of the six grave violations. However, the violations are closely linked to modern slavery because acts constituting these violations may also amount to human trafficking (UNODC, n.d.). The UN Secretary-General underlined that 'children affected by armed conflict become significantly vulnerable to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation' (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 3). Although it is not stated explicitly, some of these violations fall under the umbrella of modern slavery practices (Global Protection Cluster, 2020, p. 53). For example, the recruitment and use of children in armed forces or groups is a form of human trafficking because both the act (recruitment) and purpose (exploitation) elements of the human trafficking offence are also elements of this grave violation (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 3). Further, rape and other forms of sexual violence against children may also constitute human trafficking because these acts are generally committed by armed groups for the purpose of sexual exploitation (ibid). Similarly, abduction of children in armed conflict can also amount to human trafficking if it is committed for exploitative purposes (ibid).

The UN Secretary-General affirmed this understanding of the six violations as including modern slavery practices, underlining the fact that at least three of the six grave violations against children (namely, recruitment and use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abduction of children) are directly linked to human trafficking (ibid). The link between abductions, recruitment, and human trafficking is also recognised in Resolution 2427 (2018) of the UNSC.

Other grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict are connected to modern slavery in a less direct way. While they do not constitute modern slavery practices on their own, they may increase the vulnerability of children to modern slavery practices (Global Protection Cluster, 2020, p. 53). For example, the killing and maiming of children may result from trafficking of children in armed conflict (ibid). Similarly, attacks on schools and hospitals may be carried out as a tactic to abduct or recruit children, and increases the vulnerability of children to human trafficking (ibid). As noted by the UN Secretary-General, preventing children from accessing humanitarian supports may also increase their vulnerability to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation, since they are forced to seek other ways to access aid (UN Secretary-General, 2018, p. 3).

"At least three of the six grave violations against children are directly linked to human trafficking. Others are connected to modern slavery indirectly."

7.2.1. Recruitment and use of children in armed conflict
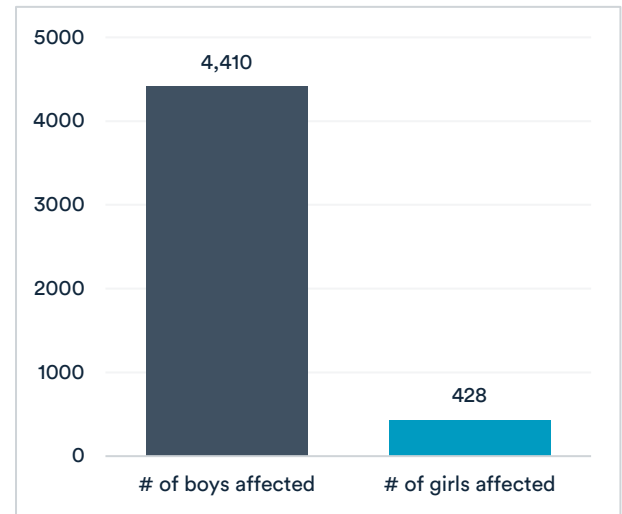
The involvement of children in armed conflict is prohibited under international law and in itself constitutes a modern slavery practice. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (2000) requires States to ensure that children under age 18 are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces. It is required that the minimum age for voluntary recruitment should be above age 15. Further, States are required to ensure that recruitment and use of individuals under the age of 18 by non-

state armed groups is prevented. The recruitment and use of children as child soldiers is also addressed in the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in 2015. Target 8.7 of SDGs requires, among others, that States 'take immediate and effective measures (…) to secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms'.

The UNSC 'strongly condemns the recruitment and use of child soldiers by parties to armed conflict' (Resolution 1612 (2005); Resolution 1882 (2009); Resolution 1998 (2011)). It refers to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which considers the conscription or enlistment of children under the age of 15 into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities as a war crime (Resolution 1460 (2003); Resolution 2143 (2014)). Therefore, the UNSC requested Member States and the UN system take efforts to end the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict (Resolution 1261 (1999), Article 13); Resolution 1379 (2001) Article 11). It also emphasised that specific initiatives should be developed to address the cross-border recruitment and abduction of children and to ensure the declaration of the prohibition of the use of child soldiers in violation of international law (Resolution 1314 (2000), Article 16; Resolution 1379 (2001) Article 13).

Figure 9. Recruitment and use of children by sex, verified in 2021

Despite these commitments, thousands of children are subjected to recruitment or use in armed conflict every year. Figure 9 shows the number of children recruited and used in armed conflict as verified in 2021. A total of 4,838 children were affected by recruitment and use in armed conflict. Boys are recorded to experience a disproportionate level of recruitment and use in armed conflict, representing 91% of all verified violations in 2021 (4,410 boys). A total of 428 girls (9%) were also identified as victims of this grave violation. The highest number of children recruited and used was recorded in Syria with a total of 1,301 children (1,262 boys and 39 girls). This was followed by Somalia with 1,161 children (1,116 boys and 45 girls). In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 693 children (608 boys and 85 girls) were recruited and used.
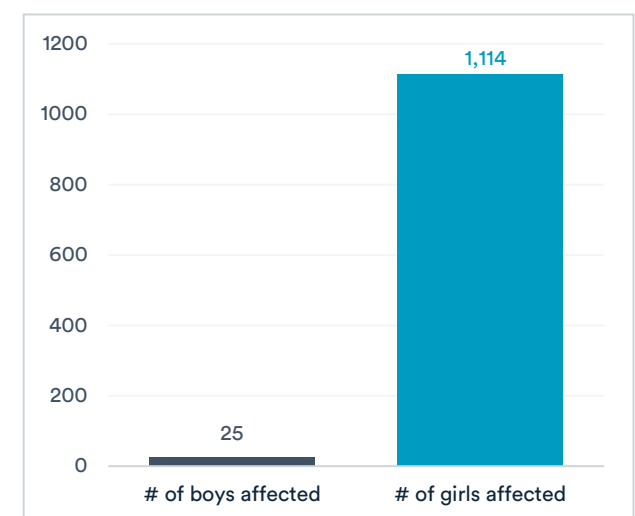
7.2.2. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children

Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children are prohibited under international law and may constitute a modern slavery practice depending on the circumstances of the case. The UNSC requested the UN Secretary-General include in the annexes to his reports on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage in patterns of rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in situations of armed conflict (Resolution 1882 (2009), Article 3). It also required parties listed in the annexes of the Secretary-General's report that commit rape and other forms of sexual violence against children in situations of armed conflict prepare concrete time-bound action plans to halt those violations and abuses (ibid, Article 5(b)).

Figure 10. Rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, verified in 2021

Despite the commitments, thousands of children are subjected to rape and other forms of sexual exploitation in armed conflicts every year. Figure 10 shows the number of children that experienced rape and other forms of sexual exploitation in armed conflict as verified in 2021. A total of 1,139 children were found to be victims of rape and other forms of sexual violence in this year. Girls are recorded to experience a disproportionate level of rape and sexual exploitation in armed conflict, representing 98% of all verified violations in 2021 (1,114 girls). A total of 25 boys (2%) were also identified as victims of this grave violation. The highest number of children who were subject to rape and other forms of sexual violence was recorded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with a total number of 436 children (429 girls, 7 boys). This was followed by Somalia with 307 children (306 girls, 1 boy), and 211 girls in the Central African Republic.

7.2.3. Abduction of children

Abduction of children is prohibited under international law and may constitute a modern slavery practice when committed for the purpose of exploitation (including for use in armed conflict). The UNSC requested that the Secretary-General include in the annexes to his reports on children and armed conflict those parties to armed conflict that engage in patterns of abduction of children in armed conflict (Resolution 2225 (2015), Article 3). Further, the UNSC urged the immediate, safe, and unconditional release of abducted children by all parties to conflict (ibid, Article 5).

Despite the commitments, large numbers of children are abducted in situations of armed conflict every year. Figure 11 shows the number of children that experienced abduction in armed conflict settings as verified in 2021. A total of 2,919 children were found to be victims of abduction in 2021. Although less starkly gendered than recruitment and use of children or rape and other forms of sexual violence against children, abduction of children disproportionately impacts boys, who made up 67% of verified cases in 2021 (1,943 boys). The highest number of abducted children was recorded in Somalia, where 1,030 children were verified as having been abducted in 2021—933 boys and 97 girls. the Democratic Republic of the Congo with 684 children (416 boys, 268 girls), the Lake Chad basin with 349 children (167 boys, 182 girls), Burkina Faso with 250 children (88 boys, 159 girls, 3 sex unknown), Nigeria with 211 children (115 boys, 96 girls), and the Central African Republic with 111 children (47 boys, 64 girls).

Figure 11. Abduction of children in armed conflict, verified in 2021
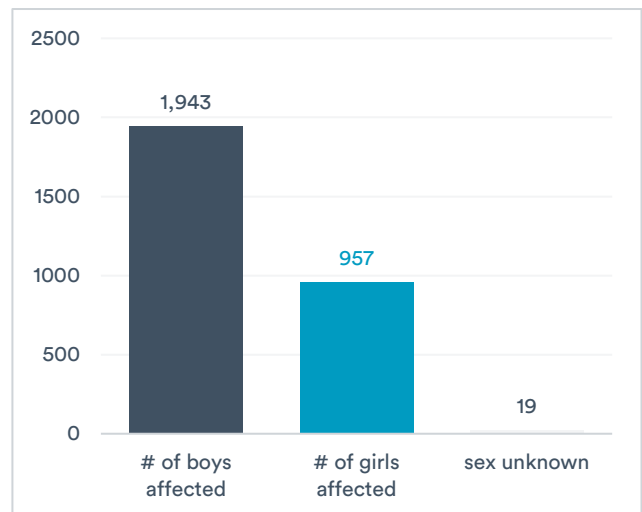
7.3 Action plans on children and armed conflict

The UNSC requires parties listed in the annexes of the UN Secretary-General's reports prepare concrete time-bound action plans to halt those violations and abuses (Resolution 1539(2004) and Resolution 1612(2005)). Action plans are a written, signed commitment between the UN and those parties who are listed for grave violations against children in the UN Secretary-General's reports (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, n.d.). Each action plan is designed to address a specific party's situation, and outlines concrete, time-bound steps that lead to compliance with international law, delisting, and a more protected future for children (ibid). Action plans include specific commitments for parties to address and implement activities to end grave violations against children. Reviewing action plans addressing grave violations against children signed by parties to armed conflicts, Watchlist found that 'action plans play a positive and strategic role in bringing an end to grave violations against children – delisting after implementation' (2013, p. 3).

Since the beginning of the children and armed conflict mandate, 38 action plans have been signed with parties to armed conflicts, including 11 State forces and 27 non-state armed groups. Of these, 12 parties have fully complied with their commitments, and therefore, were subsequently delisted, whereas four action plans were replaced by consolidated action plans. Several action plans were terminated because parties ceased to exist (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, n.d.).

As of September 2022, eighteen action plans remained under implementation (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, n.d.). UNICEF reviewed all action plans signed by parties to armed conflicts since 2005, and found that the scope of action plans varies from one to another (2022, p. 31). For example, the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts was addressed in all but a few action plans, while 22% of action plans addressed both the recruitment and use of children and at least one other violation (ibid). Killing and maiming and sexual violence have been addressed in seven action plans each, while attacks on schools and hospitals have been addressed in four action plans and abduction in one (ibid). The emphasis on the recruitment and use of children in action plans is understandable, given that this grave violation is the most extensively used violation to list parties to armed conflict in the annexes to the UN Secretary-General's annual reports.

8. Modern slavery and protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC)

Conflicts create fertile environments for the subjection of civilians to modern slavery practices—both directly by armed groups, armed forces, and state actors involved in the conflict, and indirectly as traffickers take advantage of degradation in the rule of law and people become more vulnerable (see section 4). This makes the UNSC agenda on protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC) directly relevant to preventing and addressing modern slavery practices in these settings. Adding the protection of civilians in armed conflict to its agenda in 1999, the UNSC recognised this as an international peace and security issue (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2019, p. 4). Since 1999, the UNSC has adopted eight thematic resolutions on protection of civilians in armed conflict.

8.1 The impact of armed conflicts on civilians

Civilians are affected by armed conflicts in a variety of ways. Armed conflicts cause high levels of civilian death, injury and psychological trauma, sexual violence, torture, family separation, and disappearance (UN Secretary-General, 2021, p. 1). Armed conflicts also affect civilians by damaging homes, schools, markets, hospitals, and essential civilian infrastructure, including electrical and water systems (ibid). Civilians affected by armed conflicts suffer from deprivation, hunger, and displacement (ibid.). The collapse of rule of law, lack of humanitarian aid, heightened socioeconomic stress, forced displacement and social fragmentation and family breakdown create a fertile environment for traffickers to exploit (UNODC, 2018, p. 5). All of these conditions created by conflict exacerbate the risk to these civilians of modern slavery practices.

> "Conditions created by conflict place civilians at risk of modern slavery practices."

Conflict-driven hunger has a devastating impact on civilians living in areas affected by armed conflicts. Parties to armed conflicts specifically target food supply to drive food insecurity by interrupting food production, cutting off access to food, and destroying food sources (UN Secretary-General, 2022, p. 6). Across 24 countries affected by armed conflicts, 140 million people faced crisis levels (or worse) of acute food insecurity in 2021 (ibid). People living in Ethiopia, Nigeria, South Sudan, and Yemen suffered from actual or projected catastrophic food insecurity due to armed conflicts and violence (ibid, p.5). Food insecurity places people at increased risk of modern slavery practices, as their options for non-exploitative work are radically reduced, they may adopt negative coping strategies for survival, and may undertake risky migration journeys in order to survive.

Forced displacement is another phenomenon affecting civilian populations in areas of armed conflict. As of mid-2021, it was estimated that there were 84 million people in the world who were forcibly displaced, nearly 50.9 million of whom were internally displaced by conflict (UN Secretary-General, 2022, p. 7). There were 4.4 million people seeking asylum, while 26.6 million were refugees. Displacement may also be repeated as situations of instability and conflict evolve. Millions of people experienced forced displacement more than once, and sometimes up to 25 times (ibid). As of 2021, there were 6.6 million people internally displaced in Syria, 5.6 million in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 4.2 million in Ethiopia, 4.9 million in Colombia, and 4.3 million in Yemen (ibid).

8.2 UNSC resolutions on protection of civilians in armed conflict

The UNSC has consistently affirmed that civilians are the people most vulnerable in armed conflict and targeted by armed groups (Resolution 1265 (1999), preamble; Resolution 1296 (2000), preamble). As such, it emphasised that the causes of armed conflict should be addressed in a comprehensive manner to enhance the protection of civilians on a long-term basis (Resolution 1265 (1999), preamble; Resolution 1738 (2006), preamble; Resolution 2222 (2015) preamble). The UNSC recognised that the prevention of armed conflict requires a comprehensive approach through promoting economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for, and protection of, human rights (Resolution 1674 (2006), Article 2; Resolution 1674 (2006), preamble; Resolution 1738 (2006), preamble).

In this regard, it is underlined that education can play a role in supporting efforts to halt and prevent abuses committed against civilians affected by armed conflict, including sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and the recruitment of child soldiers (Resolution 1674 (2006), preamble).

The UNSC has encouraged Member States to consider ratifying the major instruments of international humanitarian, human rights, and refugee law, and to take appropriate legislative, judicial and administrative measures to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflicts (Resolution 1265 (1999), Article 5). Safe and unhindered access of humanitarian personnel to civilians in armed conflict, including refugees and internally displaced persons, is also emphasised (ibid, Article 7). Parties to armed conflicts are requested to take special measures to meet the protection and assistance requirements of women, children, and other vulnerable groups (ibid, Article 10), while peacekeeping missions are given suitable mandates and adequate resources to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical danger (ibid, Article 13). In 2000, the UNSC indicated that it would consider collaborating with relevant regional and subregional organisations to improve opportunities for the resolution of armed conflicts and the protection of civilians in armed conflict (Resolution 1296 (2000), Article 7).

In Resolution 1674 (2006), the UNSC specifically condemned acts of violence or abuses committed against civilians in situations of armed conflict and demanded that all parties put an end to such practices (Resolution 1674 (2006), Article 5). In particular, the UNSC denounced:

(1) Torture and other prohibited treatment;
(2) Gender-based and sexual violence;
(3) Violence against children;
(4) The recruitment and use of child soldiers;
(5) Trafficking in humans;
(6) Forced displacement; and
(7) The intentional denial of humanitarian assistance.

Resolution 1674 (2006) was significant in addressing modern slavery practices, with the UNSC explicitly naming human trafficking and the recruitment and use of children in the context of the PCAC agenda. Further, the UNSC also addressed all acts of sexual exploitation, abuse, and trafficking of women and children by military, police, and civilian personnel involved in UN operations (Resolution 1674 (2006), Article 20).

Against this background, it can be said that the UNSC's agenda on PCAC has some important implications for addressing modern slavery practices in armed conflicts. Although the UNSC has not directly engaged with the risk of modern slavery practices to civilians affected by armed conflicts, it has attributed significant importance to addressing the root causes of conflict through promoting economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, national reconciliation, good governance, democracy, the rule of law, and respect for, and protection of, human rights. All these factors are interconnected with civilians' vulnerability to modern slavery practices, and the prevalence of such. However, the lack of references to modern slavery practices in the PCAC agenda has been criticised. One interviewee stated that the PCAC agenda does not adequately address the issue of modern slavery practices in situations of armed conflicts because:

> "The UNSC's PCAC agenda has important implications for addressing modern slavery practices, which have been tackled in important wats in this context. However, the UNSC has been criticised for failing to adequately address modern slavery practices in the PCAC agenda."

Trafficking does not reflect prominently as protection of civilians. This is one of the debate or frustrations I have. It is like [asking] what constitutes protection of civilians for us. If you look from our mandate, [human trafficking] would be part of protection of civilians. But when you have ongoing armed conflict, you know probably, saving people from being killed … might be protection of civilians. But for us from our mandate, human trafficking is [part of] protection of civilians. But I don't think it reflects prominently, to be honest (Interviewee #7).

9. Conclusion and recommendations

There is a strong nexus between modern slavery practices and armed conflict. The risk of modern slavery practices increases in situations of armed conflict. People affected by armed conflicts may be targeted by both criminal actors and armed groups (Global Protection Cluster, 2020, p. 10). The risk of trafficking by criminal actors is coupled with the risk of being exploited by armed groups involved in conflict. The use of modern slavery practices by armed groups raises a serious security concern for international peace. This indicates that there is a need to integrate modern slavery in responses to armed conflicts. As Interviewee #5 highlighted: 'anti-slavery must be an integral part of any humanitarian response in situations of armed conflict and humanitarian crises'.

Recent developments at the UNSC in addressing modern slavery practices in situations of armed conflict are welcomed. As a response to the use of modern slavery practices by armed groups, the UNSC adopted a Presidential Statement (2015) and two resolutions (2016 and 2017) on human trafficking in situations of conflict. Further, the UNSC addressed human trafficking in several thematic debates and resolutions dealing with conflicts in various regions. The UNSC's resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of conflict are important tools to identify the issue and promote recognition at global, regional, and local levels. The inclusion of modern slavery practices in UNSC resolutions adds value to efforts to address these issues and helps actors working on the ground to develop better responses. When entering engagement and dialogue with parties to armed conflicts, resolutions are frequently invoked as they are considered a form of 'backing from global level' (Interviewee #3).

Despite positive developments in the UNSC's efforts to address modern slavery practices, the scope of resolutions remains restricted to situations of armed conflict, preventing their use in non-armed conflict contexts. This was identified as a concern given that there are many situations of significant crisis and insecurity of relevance to the international peace and security agenda, which entail massive risks of modern slavery practices, but which are not armed conflicts. Further, there are challenges faced in the implementation of resolutions in practice. Resolutions are not backed up with sufficient resources, affecting their impacts on the ground.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflicts. They are also particularly vulnerable to specific modern slavery practices in armed conflict, including being held as slaves and used for sexual exploitation by armed and terrorist groups. The UNSC's women, peace and security (WPS) agenda is an important policy framework to address the vulnerability of women and girls to modern slavery practices. Since 2000, the UNSC has adopted ten resolutions under the WPS agenda. However, it has not specifically and substantively addressed modern slavery practices in this context. Rather, the UNSC has focused on the participation of women in peace processes and addressed sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence in the context of armed conflict. Given that the WPS agenda has significant implications in terms of addressing modern slavery practices, the UNSC should more explicitly engage with these issues in this context.

> "The UNSC has taken important steps to address modern slavery practices, including in its WPS, CAC, and PCAC agendas. However, more needs to be done to ensure a systematic and comprehensive response to modern slavery practices by the UNSC."

Similar to the WPS agenda, the UNSC has not engaged with modern slavery practices in its children and armed conflict agenda (CAC) in a comprehensive manner. The UNSC does not consider modern slavery practices as one of the grave violations against children in armed conflicts. Although at least three of the six grave violations against children are directly linked to human trafficking (namely, recruitment and use, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and abduction of children), the UNSC has not explicitly addressed either modern slavery practices or human trafficking specifically in its children and armed conflict (CAC) agenda.

A similar trend is observed in the protection of civilians in armed conflict (PCAC) agenda. Although the PCAC agenda has important implications for addressing modern slavery practices in armed conflicts, the UNSC has not directly engaged with the risk of modern slavery to civilians affected by armed conflicts. Nevertheless, the UNSC has addressed the root causes of conflicts through promoting economic growth, poverty eradication, sustainable development, good governance, and the rule of law, which have significant implications for addressing the root causes of modern slavery.

Although further efforts to address modern slavery practices within the agenda of the UNSC were generally welcomed, this study also uncovered a level of suspicion as to whether the UNSC is an appropriate platform to address these issues. Some argue that modern slavery practices are outside the mandate of the UNSC. However, this report shows that modern slavery practices are closely linked with armed conflict. In some circumstances, the level, extent, and severity of modern slavery practices may in themselves reach a point where they can be considered as a threat to international peace and security. Therefore, the UNSC should in principle address modern slavery practices in situations of armed conflict and non-armed conflict.

9.1 Recommendations

This study reviewed a wide range of documents, policies, instruments, and initiatives at the level of the UNSC. This gives rise to a wide range of potential actions for the UNSC and Member States in improving their efforts to address modern slavery practices in conflict and non-conflict settings. A range of general recommendations for the UNSC are outlined below.

(1) So far, the UNSC has not engaged with modern slavery practices in a consistent manner. It has only begun to address these practices in recent years. It should therefore engage with modern slavery practices more often, in a coherent and consistent way.

(2) Modern slavery practices should not only be addressed in the context of armed conflict per se, but should be considered as a threat to international peace and security. The UNSC should consider addressing these issues outside of the scope of terrorism and conflict.

(3) When addressing modern slavery practices, the UNSC should not only rely on peace and security concerns, but should also take a human rights approach with an aim of integrating these themes.

(4) The UNSC appears to respond to emergency crises rather than addressing ongoing issues. It should consider developing policies and strategies to address ongoing issues of modern slavery practices instead of responding only to isolated emergency issues.

(5) The UNSC should not consider its agendas in isolation, but should integrate its efforts and work on modern slavery practices across all agendas. Therefore, when dealing with modern slavery, the UNSC should take an integrated approach.

(6) The UNSC's resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict are welcomed, but not sufficient. The UNSC should ensure ongoing involvement in ending modern slavery practices through the implementation of its resolutions on the ground.

(7) There is some confusion about whether resolutions adopted outside the scope of the Chapter VII are binding on Member States. Therefore, the UNSC should consider adopting binding resolutions on modern slavery practices acting under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

(8) In addition to its thematic resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflicts, the UNSC should also refer to modern slavery practices in other relevant resolutions with respect to peace and security issues. This will help raise awareness of these issues on a global level.

(9) Although the UNSC has begun to address human trafficking in its recent thematic resolutions, there are too many asks on Member States across different agendas. Some similar or related measures are addressed across all agendas of the UNSC. Therefore, the UNSC should consider integrating its agendas, focusing on particular themes and measures to reduce the ask on Member States.

(10) The UNSC should consider addressing modern slavery practices comprehensively as part of its WPS agenda. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by armed conflicts and are more vulnerable to modern slavery practices. Therefore, their vulnerability should be addressed as part of the WPS agenda to develop policies, strategies, and mechanisms to prevent women and girls from being subject to modern slavery practices.

(11) Modern slavery practices are not listed as grave violations against children. However, these practices are serious enough to be considered grave violations. Although there are some implications for modern slavery practices when dealing with the six grave violations, they should be given the utmost importance in ensuring the protection of children in armed conflict. Therefore, the UNSC should consider making explicit references to modern slavery practices in its children and armed conflict agenda. It should also consider recognising modern slavery as a distinct grave violation affecting children in armed conflicts, which may trigger listing of parties in annual reports of the Secretary-General.

(12) The UNSC should consider the possibility of a global arrest warrant for individuals sanctioned due to their involvement in modern slavery practices. This will ensure that sanctions are not just 'shame and blame' mechanism, but an effective tool to bring perpetrators to justice and ensure accountability, as well as sending a strong message to deter would-be offenders.

(13) The UNSC should consider invoking the jurisprudence of the ICC to prosecute perpetrators of modern slavery practices, since these crimes may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes under certain conditions. The UNSC should not refrain from using this tool to ensure that modern slavery practices are taken seriously.

(14) The UNSC should consider some mechanism to ensure the effective implementation of its resolutions on trafficking in persons in situations of armed conflict. This requires that sufficient resources are made available on the ground to address these issues. Therefore, the UNSC should ensure the availability and sufficiency of resources to tackle modern slavery practices.

(15) Modern slavery practices are not always the priority in situations of armed conflicts. Member States dealing with armed conflicts tend to focus on defence and fighting rather than devoting their limited resources to counter modern slavery. Therefore, the UNSC should ensure that modern slavery practices are also given the utmost importance in situations of armed conflict.

(16) The UNSC should work towards consensus-building, cooperation, and joint efforts among Member States to ensure a unified approach to end modern slavery practices in conflict and non-conflict settings.

(17) The UNSC should support Member States in armed conflicts to ensure the rule of law and institutional capacity to fight modern slavery as people become more vulnerable to modern slavery when the rule of law collapses.

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