

TARGETED CHILDHOOD

An Analysis of Patterns of the Six Grave Violations Against Yemen's Children

Field Study

Aden, Hodeidah, Taiz, Marib, and Dhamar

Rasd Coalition Publications 2025
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DT Institute

DT Institute is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to “doing development differently.” We implement complex global development programs in conflict-affected, fragile, and closed environments, and fund thought leadership initiatives that spur innovation and improve lives through evidence-based programs.

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The Yemeni Coalition for Monitoring Human Rights Violations (YCMHRV, also known as the Rasd Coalition)

YCMHRV is a Yemeni civil-society organization established in January 2015 (License No. 1240). The Coalition monitors and documents all human-rights violations in Yemen through its field team, issues specialized reports on those violations, and submits them to relevant local and international bodies to pave the way for accountability and ensure the principle of no impunity. It also trains and advocates for human-rights causes locally and internationally and raises awareness of human-rights principles and concepts.

Supporting Awareness, Facilitating Enforcement of Children’s Rights in the Yemeni Conflict (SAFE II) Program – Phase II

The SAFE II project, implemented by DT Institute in partnership with YCMHRV, aims to protect Yemeni children from grave human rights violations during armed conflict by boosting local and international recognition and facilitating accountability of perpetrators. SAFE II pursues this by conducting community- and victim-focused civic education campaigns that enable safe reporting of grave violations; documenting and investigating these violations to inform justice and accountability dialogues with international stakeholders using reliable evidence; and catalyzing dialogue among Yemeni justice actors on protecting children during and after conflict.

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Definitions

The Six Grave Violations Against Children in Times of War

As identified by UN Security Council Resolution 1261 (1999), killing and maiming, recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups, sexual violence; abduction, attacks on schools and hospitals, and denial of humanitarian access.

Compound Violation

The occurrence of two or more of the six grave violations against the same child, either simultaneously or at different times.

Single Violation

The occurrence of one of the six grave violations against a child.

Introduction

Yemen's children are suffering a shocking humanitarian situation that has intensified alarmingly over the past two years due to severe economic decline, a 300% rise in food prices since 2015, lack of employment opportunities, and the expansion of poverty and hunger. Around 19.5 million Yemenis are in need, including 17.1 million children and women needing urgent assistance. Amid this acute crisis, conflict has spread nationwide — reaching 52 frontlines. With it, and under the collapse of rule of law, absence of accountability, and rampant impunity taking place throughout Yemen, the six grave violations against children have increased.

Within the conflict, a complex, underreported pattern has emerged: repeated commission of these grave violations against children. A child may sustain multiple grave violations at once or sequentially, or an initial violation can lead to others — for example, abduction can lead to torture, then recruitment, and possibly killing. Such compounded crimes magnify harm, causing severe, multidimensional damage to children's physical and mental health, education, and future —creating a vicious cycle of violence and deprivation that hinders prospects for sustainable peace.

Through the activities of the SAFE II project, the Rasd Coalition observed this pattern and conducted the field study *Targeted Childhood*, covering Aden, Hodeidah, Taiz, Marib, and Dhamar. It includes interviews with 57 professionals involved in child protection to analyze links among the recurring six grave violations, their patterns, connections (by perpetrators, timing, and repetition), the child groups most affected, impacts on victims and families, and the scope of government and civil society organization (CSO) interventions.

The study is structured as follows: Executive Summary; Objectives, Methodology, and Determinants; Context of Crimes Against Children; and Field Findings (five parts: patterns of violations, victims and reporting, perpetrators, impacts, and interventions), along with recommendations and sources.

Executive Summary

This first-of-its-kind Yemeni study analyzes how the six grave violations are perpetrated repeatedly against child victims, identifying relationships and interlinkages by perpetrator, timing, repetition, and cumulative effect. It forms part of the SAFE II project, implemented by YCMHRV in partnership with the DT Institute. It is based primarily on information from 57 participants working with/on children during conflict in five governorates: Aden, Hodeidah, Taiz, Marib, and Dhamar.

Key insights:

- Children have suffered multiple, repeated grave violations, either concurrently or sequentially, compounding humanitarian harm.
- The temporal spacing between violations varies: They may sometimes be undefined or months/a year apart (suggesting waves of violence). In other cases, it may be weeks or immediate succession, indicating a rapid cascade.
- Ordering: Although ordering varies by governorate, forced recruitment consistently emerged as the most widespread, and often the first, violation (29.14% of violations),

followed by killing (23.84%), then attacks on schools (15.23%) and sexual exploitation (15.23%). Recruitment often serves as the gateway that draws children into broader compound violations.

- Violation drivers cluster into four pillars: (1) structural-economic (such as poverty and deprivation); (2) conflict-security (including war, mines, insecurity, and multiple armed actors); (3) institutional-legal (including weak state, lack of protection, no accountability); and (4) cultural-familial (such as ignorance, harmful norms, family breakdown).
- Most affected groups: internally displaced persons (IDPs), girls, *Muhamasheen* (marginalized) community members, the economically marginalized, and children with disabilities — groups marked by vulnerability, poverty, low awareness, and fear of reporting.
- Reporting is weak: 84.21% of respondents said victims/families report at low levels. Key deterrents include threats from perpetrators, low awareness that compound violations are crimes, and distrust of justice mechanisms. Compared to 1.75% of respondents, which said that reporting is high, and 14.4% of participants, which said that reporting is average.
- Perpetrators: All parties commit compound violations to varying degrees. 87.72% of respondents identified the Ansar Allah (Houthi) group as the main actor repeatedly committing such violations. Others (including government forces, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), joint forces, extremists, and smaller armed groups) were cited as committing violations “sometimes” or “not at all,” with smaller shares saying they did so extensively.
- Impacts: Psychological trauma is the top impact (54%) and an axis driving other harms (including school dropouts, aggression, addiction, suicide, and social exclusion). These findings were consistent with respondents’ opinions on the nature of interventions provided to victims by civil society and official bodies. Psychological and social support was the most prevalent (22.81%), followed by protection and documentation (21.05%), and then awareness-raising, humanitarian support, integration, rehabilitation, and medical assistance at varying rates. The findings showed that compound violations have broad, compounded, and chronic impacts on child victims at the psychological, social, health, and economic levels, as compared to singular violations.
- Interventions: State interventions are largely weak or absent according to 84.2% of respondents, compared to 15.8% who rated state interventions as medium or high. CSO interventions were also rated weak/absent by 77.2% of respondents, compared to 22.80% who rated this as medium or high. Barriers include poor family cooperation to document subsequent violations, lack of awareness of additional violations, limited funding for follow-up, non-systematic documentation, and urban-centric programming.
- The study also showed that 49.12% of respondents believe that civil society interventions and/or pressure have not succeeded in neutralizing actors or reducing attacks on children, compared to 10.53% who believe they have succeeded, while 40.35% see them as somewhat successful. This may reflect the weak spread of civil society so far, and the lack of programs dedicated to this type of violation.
- Recommendations include building capacity for documenting sequential violations, safe reporting channels, and electronic archiving; coupling documentation with assistance; integrating psychosocial experts into investigation teams; expanding outreach to marginalized/rural communities; encouraging schools to report violations; creating specialized government units on child violations; reactivating child/youth offices and juvenile police; and investing donor support for a national database and national child-rights observatory.

Second: Objectives, Methodology, and Determinants

1. Study Objective

This is YCMHRV's second field study under the SAFE (DTI-funded) project, focusing on patterns of the six grave violations — specifically the systematic repetition of such violations against the same victim, whether within one timeframe or across different periods.

The study aims to: analyze interrelations and patterns; identify the perpetrators, time, and most affected child groups; compare impacts of c vs. single violations; identify actors involved in multiple types of violations; and gauge state/CSO interventions for these victims.

2. Study Methodology

The study engaged directly with participants across governorates, using a participatory, holistic approach and combining quantitative and qualitative methods:

- **In-depth interviews** with professionals knowledgeable about violations against children during the conflict;
- **Documentary investigations** focused on victims, reporters, and witnesses;
- Modalities included face-to-face, phone, and online communication. Expert analysts supported writing and data analysis. In some analyses, responses were sequenced (first violation, second, ... up to sixth), omitting answers that lacked the necessary sequencing.

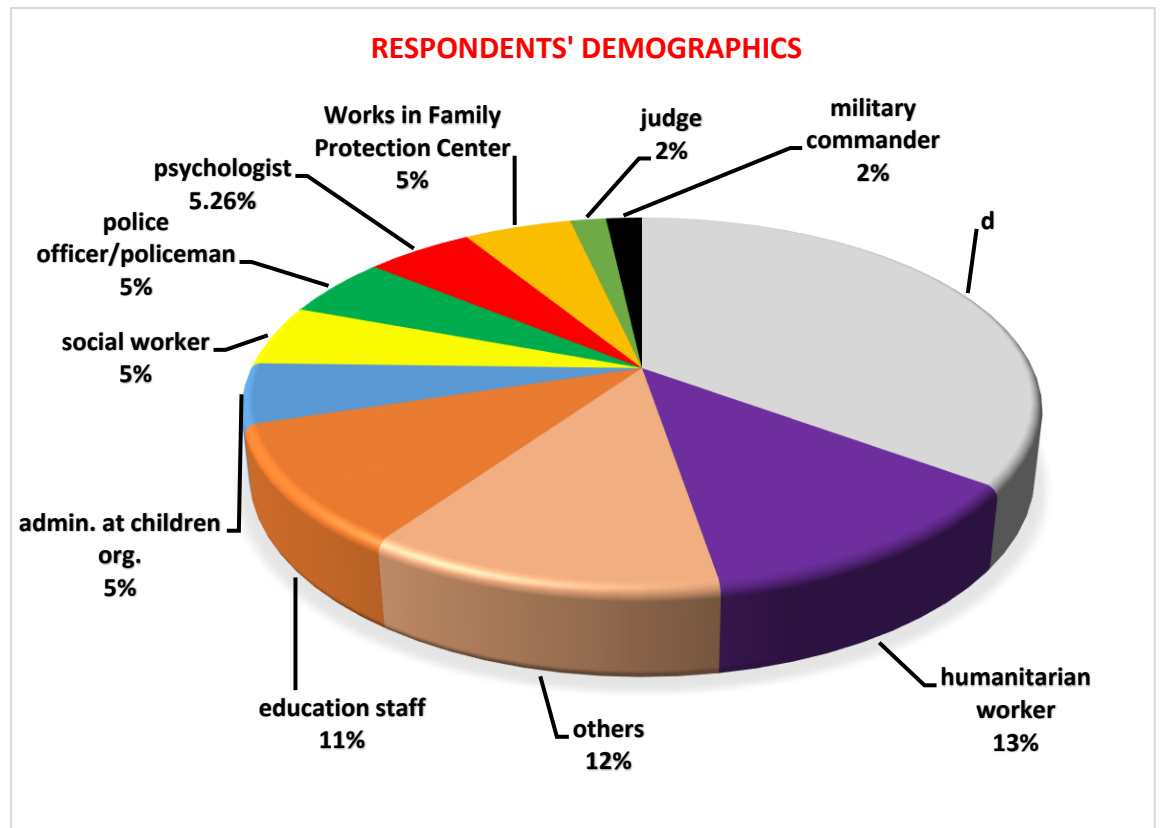
3. Study Sample

Two types of engagement were used: (1) in-depth interviews and (2) documentary investigations.

- **In-depth interviews:** 57 respondents in five governorates (Aden, Hodeidah, Taiz, Marib, and Dhamar), including 19 female (33.33%) and 38 male (66.67%) respondents. Human rights documenters constituted the largest group (35%), followed by humanitarian workers (13%), education staff (11%), and others (including CSO administrators in child-related fields, social workers, police, psychologists, family-protection centers, military commanders, and judges, among others), *see chart 1*. While the respondents from other categories amounted to 12% and were distributed among a worker in the child soldier integration project, two university students, a lawyer, a journalist, a religious man, and a court clerk.
- **Documentary investigations:** 82 grave-violation incidents across 13 governorates (Taiz, Al-Bayda, Al-Dhalea, Hajjah, Aden, Amran, Marib, Sanaa City, Dhamar, Al-Mahwit, Hodeidah, Abyan, and Lahj). Victims: 56 boys (77%), 13 girls (18%), and 4 facilities (5%). Violations: killing/maiming (41%), recruitment (28%), detention (22%), attacks on schools/hospitals (5%), denial of aid (4%).

A purposive sample prioritized those working with and on child issues to help map compound violation patterns, affected groups, impacts, perpetrators, and the scale of interventions; and to measure interventions by the official institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

4. Data Collection Tools



- Tablets, phone, and online communications;
- Paper/audio documentation and face-to-face interviews with victims/families/reporters regarding grave violations;
- **Kobo Toolbox** for in-depth interviews (open-source, mobile-friendly, suited to remote/high-risk contexts).

5. Data-Analysis Tools

- **Microsoft Excel** for quantitative analysis and charting;
- **Kobo Toolbox** analytics/reporting from primary interview data;
- **Likert scale** (four-point) to quantify co-occurring violations;
- **Sankey diagrams** for relationships between categories;
- **Lag Sequential Analysis** to count adjacent event pairs;
- **Transition matrix / first-order Markov chain** to convert adjacent counts into transition probabilities.

6. Study Scope

In-depth interviews: 57 respondents across Marib (24.56%), Aden (22.81%), Hodeidah (21.5%), Taiz (17.54%), and Dhamar (14.4%). The governorates were chosen to cover the areas of control of all main armed actors.

Documentary investigations: 82 cases of grave violations across 13 governorates/areas, including Taiz (14), Al-Bayda (13), Al-Dhalea (13), Hajjah (10), Aden (9), Amran (5), Sana'a City (3), Dhamar (3), Al-Mahwet (3), Hodiedah (2), Abyan (2), and Lahaj (1).

Third: Context of Violations Against Children

Grave violations against children have escalated nationwide with the spread of conflict. The repeated commission of violations against children stands out as a compound crime pattern, fueled by the ongoing humanitarian crisis and the collapse of the rule of law and accountability. United Nations (UN) reports cite over 52 frontlines,¹ complicating command-and-control and the prevention of violations.

Humanitarian indicators (2025): Yemeni children are experiencing a shocking humanitarian situation, exacerbated during the last two years due to 300% increase in food prices since 2015.² 19.5 million people in need (including 17.1 million women/children); 5 million are at emergency levels; 55% of children under the age of five are living with chronic malnutrition;³ and approximately 2.4 million children under the age of five suffer acute malnutrition.⁴ Multi-dimensional poverty affects an estimated 82.7% of individuals.⁵

Regional tensions and funding shortfalls have worsened conditions and increased attacks on Yemeni children. Yemen ranked second (after the occupied Palestinian territory) in **denial of humanitarian access to children** in 2022.⁶ Children constitute approximately 20% of the 4.8 million internally displaced,⁷ estimated at 4.8 million.⁸

While data is scarce, the UN Children's Fund's (UNICEF) earlier figures cite that **over 11,500** children have been killed or injured (3,900 killed and 7,600 injured).⁹ Other estimates note 154,000 direct conflict deaths and 233,000 indirect deaths (from 2014–2021), many of them children.¹⁰

Within SAFE phases I–II, YCMHRV verified 845 cases of grave violations against children from 2023 to August 2025. These violations included 636 cases of recruitment, 47 arbitrary detentions, 64 injuries, 33 killings, 13 cases of sexual violence, 48 attacks on schools, and 5

¹ The Secretary-General's fourth country report on children and armed conflict in Yemen, No. S/2025/113, dated 12 March 2025. <https://docs.un.org/ar/S/2025/113>

² Briefing by UNICEF Representative in Yemen, Peter Hawkins, 26 March 2025, <https://2u.pw/xRGZPN>

³ Save the Children <https://www.savethechildren.net/yemen>

⁴ Press Release: UNICEF Launches Groundbreaking Nutrition Initiative to Accelerate the Reduction of Malnutrition in Yemen, May 11, 2025, <https://2u.pw/djaIOA>

⁵ Yemen Multidimensional Poverty Measurement Report, United Nations Development Programme, December 2023, <https://2u.pw/lzOp6d>

⁶ Addressing the consequences of denying humanitarian access to children, document issued by the Security Council during its deliberations, S/PV.9594, dated 3 April 2024. <https://docs.un.org/ar/S/PV.9594>

⁷ Yemen Multidimensional Poverty Measurement Report, United Nations Development Programme, December 2023 <https://2u.pw/lzOp6d>

⁸ Press Release: IOM Chief of Mission Sounds Alarm as Yemen Marks a Decade of War and Humanitarian Suffering, March 26, 2025 <https://2u.pw/vTWZCI>

⁹ Press Release: UNICEF: Nine Years of Conflict in Yemen Have Left Millions of Children Malnourished and Stunted, March 26, 2024. <https://2u.pw/UWP6k>

¹⁰

denial-of-aid cases. YCMHRV also documented 7,490 child recruitment cases from 2015–2025.

Under SAFE Phase II (starting in October 2024), a second violation was recorded in 32% of monitored cases, and a **third violation** was recorded in **5%** of the cases (out of 82 cases). Killing/maiming predominated as the first violation, followed by recruitment, then detention, attacks on schools/hospitals, and denial of aid. As a second violation pattern: killing predominated, followed by recruitment, then sexual violence, detention, and attacks on schools. Third violations ranged between denial/prevention of aid and attacks on schools.

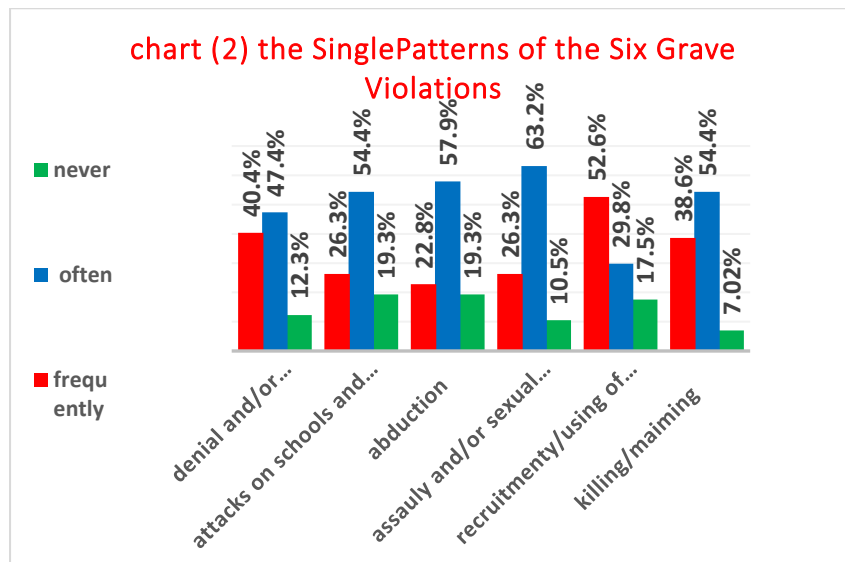
Fourth: Study Findings

This section of the study presents the findings from in-depth interviews conducted with 57 respondents across five Yemeni governorates. The respondents included professionals working in human rights documentation, child welfare, and family protection centers as well as police officers, soldiers, military leaders, social workers, juvenile judges, psychiatrists, education and humanitarian sector workers, activists, journalists, students, and others. The findings have been organized according to the following approach:

1. Pattern of Committing the Six Grave Violations

a. Singular Instances of the Six Grave Violations

Before identifying patterns of recurrence for the six grave violations, it is essential to understand the nature of the single occurrences of these violations to grasp the broader context of their occurrence in the targeted governorates. Chart 2 shows that 38.6% of the respondents stated that the killing and maiming occurs frequently, while 54.4% said they occur occasionally, and 7.2% stated they never occur.



Regarding recruitment and use of children in conflict, the majority of participants (52.6%) indicated that this violation occurs frequently, 29.8% said it occurs occasionally, and 17.5% reported it never happens.

As for sexual abuse and/or violence, only 26.3% of respondents said it occurs frequently, while the majority (63.2%) stated it occurs occasionally. This percentage may indicate a widespread occurrence of this violation, or it may suggest that its inherently hidden nature makes it known only at certain times. Meanwhile, 10.5% reported it never occurs in their governorates.

Child abduction appears to be viewed similarly to sexual violence in terms of frequency, with 22.8% stating it occurs frequently, 57.9% saying it occurs occasionally, and 19.3% confirming it never occurs.

Respondents also indicated that attacks on schools and hospitals are committed. Specifically, 26.3% reported that they occur frequently, 54.4% said they occur occasionally, and 19.3% stated that they never happen.

Regarding the denial and/or confiscation of humanitarian aid for children, 40.4% of respondents said this violation occurs frequently in their governorates, 47.4% said it occurs occasionally, and 12.3% reported it never happens.

Based on respondents' answers, there is consensus that all six grave violations are committed individually in their governorates. Recruitment and use of children, denial of humanitarian aid, and killing and maiming were identified as the most frequently committed single violations against children across all targeted governorates. Meanwhile, sexual violence and child abduction were listed among the violations that occur occasionally in all governorates.

The responses suggest a degree of interconnection in the occurrence of the six grave violations. The following paragraphs will elaborate on their patterns, contexts, and underlying causes.

b. Patterns of recurrence of the six grave violations

Chart (3) shows that all values of the relative importance of the co-occurrence of violations fall within the middle and upper ranges of the four-point Likert scale, i.e., between [25%–50%] and [50%–75%], which corresponds to the categories “often” and “frequently.” No values were recorded within the two extreme ranges [0%–25%] or [75%–100%], which represent the categories “never co-occurrence” and “always,” respectively. This means that the co-occurrence of violations does not reach the point of non-existence or permanent continuity, but rather ranges at relatively medium to high levels.

Using a four-point Likert scale, Chart (3), co-occurrence values clustered in the “frequently” (25–50%) to “often” (50–75%) bands—none at “never” or “always.”

Violations		Chart (3) The extent of the accompanying violations					
		 killing/ maiming	 Recruitment and/or use of children in conflict	 Assault and sexual violence	 Abduction	 Attacks on schools and hospitals	 Denial and depriving children of aid
Major Violation	 killing/ Maiming		* 57.8% frequently	** 36.6% occasionally	** 38.1% occasionally	** 40.1% occasionally	** 49.0% occasionally
	 Recruitment and/or use of children in conflict	* 61.7% frequently		** 47.7% often	** 47.2% often	** 41.3% often	** 46.5% often
	 Assault and sexual violence	** 48.7% often	* 57.3% frequently		** 42.9% often	** 39.5% often	** 42.9% often
	 Abduction	* 52.7% frequently	* 55.6% frequently	** 45.1% often		** 41.3% often	** 45.9% often
	 attacks on schools and hospitals	** 46.3% often	** 47.2% often	** 36.7% often	** 40.0% often		** 46.8% often
	 denial of humanitarian aid	** 41.0% often	** 45.5% often	** 39.2% often	** 40.1% often	** 39.6% often	

Interpretation of the Likert scale for responses to accompanying violations

- Relative importance falls within the Likert scale [0% - 25%] for the response "Never" (not shown in the figure)

* Relative importance falls within the Likert scale [50% - 75%] for the response "Often"

** Relative importance falls within the Likert scale [25% - 50%] for the response "Sometimes"

- Relative importance falls within the Likert scale [75% - 100%] for the response "Always" (not shown in the figure)

- **Killing/maiming ↔ recruitment/use:** strongest two-way relationship (61.7% and 57.8%).
- With killing/maiming, the next highest co-occurrence was **denial of aid** (49.0%); the lowest was **sexual violence** (36.6%).

- With **recruitment/use** as the anchor, the most frequent co-occurrence was **killing/maiming** (“frequently”); others “often,” highest with **sexual violence** (47.7%), lowest with **attacks on schools/hospitals** (41.3%).¹¹
- **Sexual violence** co-occurs most with **recruitment/use** (57.3%) (frequently), others “often.” Killing/maiming first (48.7%), and attack on schools, the last (39.5%).
- **Abduction** co-occurs “frequently” with **recruitment/use** (55.6%) and **killing/maiming** (52.7%)¹²; others “often” (e.g., denial of aid, 45.9%), and assault and sexual violence (45.1%).
- **Attacks on schools/hospitals** co-occur “often” with all, highest with **recruitment/use** (47.2%).¹³ Violence and sexual attacks (36.7%) occur in different contexts.
- **Denial of aid** mirrors schools/hospitals: all co-occurrences “often,” highest with **recruitment/use** (45.5%), and lowest assault and sexual violence at (39.2%).

Overall: violations intersect within the same conflict ecology in **recurrent but non-absolute** ways across multiple hotspots.

c) Temporal context

Reported intervals between violations (table 1), show **co-existing patterns**: (1) **very short sequences** (immediate/same day, days, weeks) indicating rapid cascades; (2) **longer gaps** (months to ≥ 1 year) suggesting periodic re-exposure/waves separated by lulls; and (3) **context-dependent/undefined** intervals, reflecting variable risk over time.

Table 1: Statistics of the Time Interval between Violations within the Compound Violations

Time interval between violations	statistical element	Governorate level					The study community level
		Hodiedah	Taiz	Dhamar	Aden	Mareb	
context-dependent/undefined	Recurrence	2	3	1	1	1	8
	Rate	18.2%	75%	16.7%	25%	10%	22.9%
≥ 1 year	Recurrence	3				1	4
	Rate	27.3%				10.0%	11.4%
3-12 Months	Recurrence	1		2		4	7
	Rate	9.1%		33.3%		40.0%	20.0%
1 month to ≤ 3 months	Recurrence	2			1	2	5
	Rate	18.2%			25%	20%	14.3%
(7–29 days) Weeks	Recurrence		1	2	1		4
	Rate		25%	33.3%	25%		11.4%
Immediate/same day	Recurrence	3		1	1	2	7
	Rate	27.3%		16.7%	25.0%	20.0%	20.0%
Total	Recurrence	11	4	6	4	10	35
	Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

¹¹ Please see the "Yemeni Children: From School to Barricades" report by the Monitoring Coalition <https://ycmhrv.org/violations/children-recruitment/2017>

¹² Please see the "Yemeni Children: Ongoing Violations" report <https://ycmhrv.org/violations/human-rights-situation/2024>

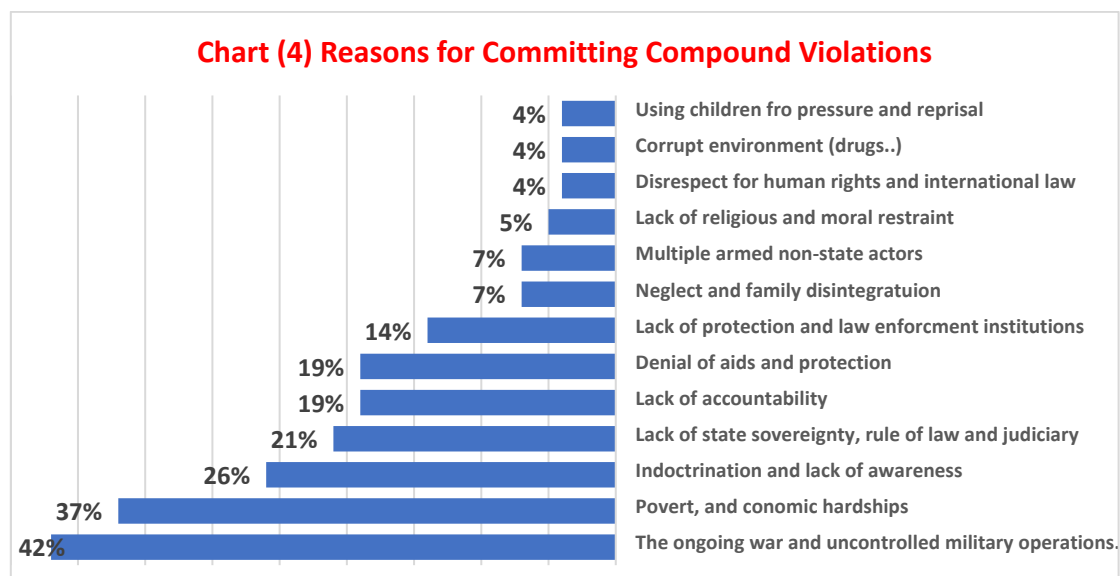
¹³ Please see "Undermining the Future: Attacks on Schools in Yemen," report, Mwatana for Human Rights, August 2020. <https://www.ceasefire.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Undermining-The-Future-Ar-1.pdf>

The table offers a “quick impression” of participants’ perception of the time intervals between violations in compound crimes. It highlights terms such as “month/months, days, weeks, one year or more” alongside expressions like “immediate/same day/unspecified,” suggesting the coexistence of distinct patterns: (1) very short sequences, sometimes reaching zero-time intervals (immediate) or spanning days/weeks, reflecting impulsive or clustered episodes of violations; (2) longer intervals in the form of month–months–one year or more, indicating cyclical re-exposure or waves of violence separated by periods of lull; and (3) the presence of “undefined/contextual” timing implies that the risk of the next incident is not temporally fixed (variable), and that experiences vary significantly among participants. These patterns reflect an understanding that the security context and the overall duration of the conflict shape the rhythm of exposure to violations.

d) Causes

For 57 respondents, the leading causes of compound violations included: **war/uncontrolled hostilities** (42%); **poverty/economic hardship** (37%); **harmful ideology/low awareness** (26%); **absence of rule of law** (21%); **lack of accountability** (19%); **deprivation from aid/weak protection programs** (19%); **weak policing/state presence** (14%); **family neglect/breakdown** (7%); **multiple non-state armed groups** (7%); **weak ethical/religious restraint** (5%); disrespect of human rights/international law (4%), corrupt environments (e.g., drug use) (4%), and using children as leverage/retaliation (4%). See chart (4).

Chart (4)

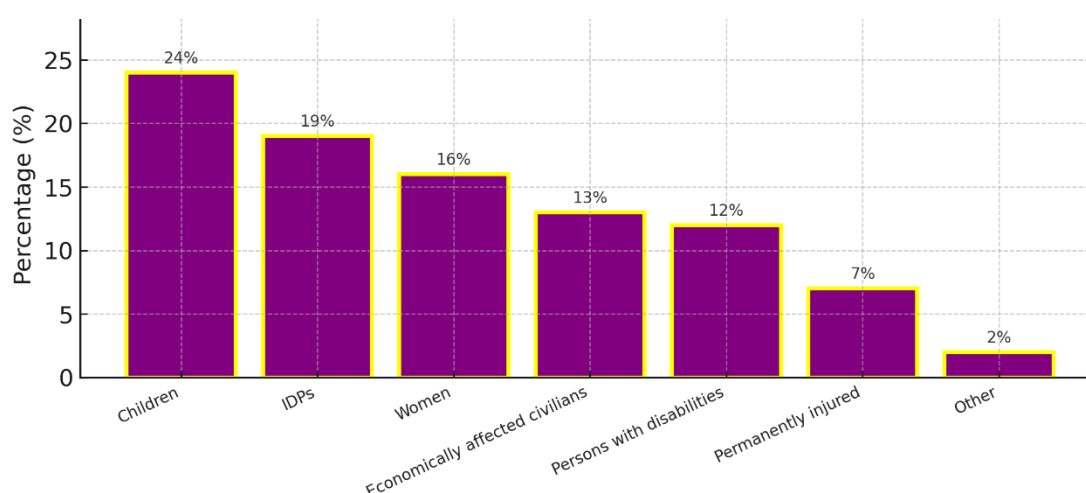


From an analytical perspective, the causes behind the commission of the six grave violations can be interpreted through four overarching dimensions:

- **Structural–Economic:** The strong presence of poverty and deprivation reflects the fragility of livelihoods and their direct link to children’s exposure to compound violations and violence (e.g., child labor, school dropouts, and sexual exploitation).

- **Conflict–Security:** War, landmines, insecurity, and the multiplicity of armed actors emerge as direct generators of widespread risk to children (e.g., recruitment, assaults, and displacement).
- **Institutional–Legal:** Weak state structures, lack of rule of law, absence of protection, and impunity frame an environment of lawlessness that reproduces violations and complicates justice for victims.
- **Cultural–Familial:** Ignorance, disinformation, harmful traditions, and family breakdown/neglect are intermediary factors that contribute to the acceptance of harmful practices and reduce families’ reliance on protection mechanisms.

Chart (5) Categories of Victims Sustained Composite Violations



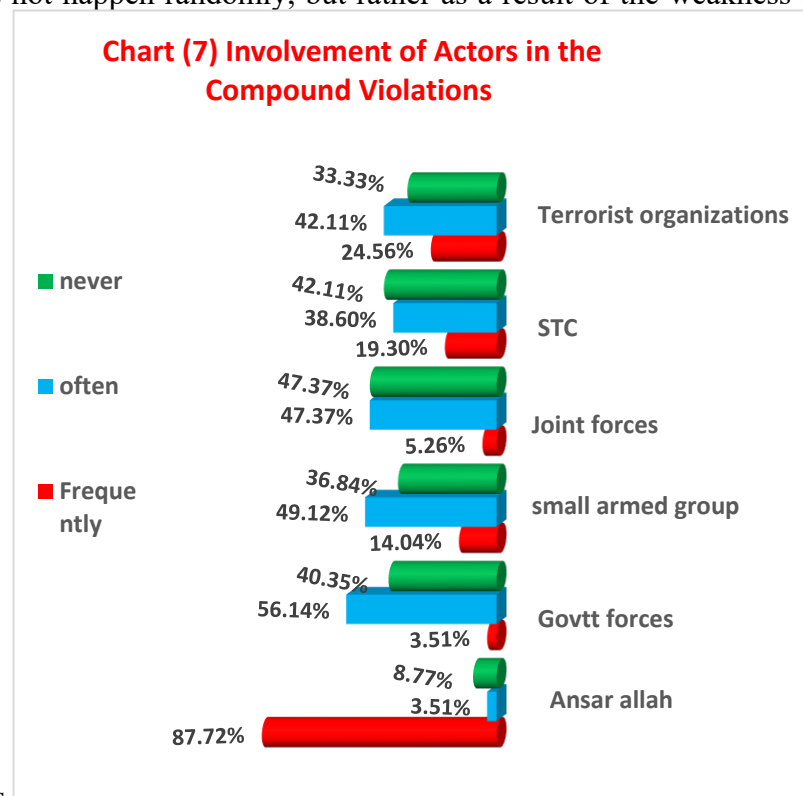
2) Victims and Reporting

a) Main Victim Groups

Most respondents cited **boys** (24.02%); **IDPs** (18.99%); **girls** (15.64%); **Muhamasheen** (13.41%); and the **economically marginalized** (11.73%) as the groups most susceptible to violations. Their vulnerability stems from poverty, low awareness/protection, and heightened fear of reporting.



A human rights defender in Aden said, "Compound violations are committed against the most vulnerable children because they lack protection and are seen as easy targets. Adolescent girls, people with disabilities, IDPs, and minorities, and/or those who live in remote areas, face double marginalization, making them more vulnerable to a series of overlapping violations such as recruitment, sexual violence, mutilation, and exploitation."¹⁴ She added, "This compound violation does not happen randomly, but rather as a result of the weakness of the



legal and social structures

that are supposed to protect them, making compound violations a reflection of a comprehensive vulnerability that extends beyond the child to encompass their entire community. ... Girls from

¹⁴ interviewed on 17 June 2025.

the marginalized group, for example, are more vulnerable to rape due to what is described as child labor on the streets, which they are more likely to engage in.”¹⁵

b) Reporting and Threats

84.21% rated reporting as **low**; 14.4% rated reporting as medium; and 1.75% rated reporting as high.

Key deterrents: Threats/fear (20%); low awareness that compound violations are crimes (19.56%); distrust of justice mechanisms (18.22%); **weak justice mechanisms** (15.56%); **few CSOs to report to** (10.67%); and **family complicity** (6.22%). Even when reports are made, **security threats** to victims/families were viewed as **high** (45.61%), **medium** (29.82%), and **low** (24.56%) by participants.¹⁶

3) Actors Involved in Compound Violations Against Children

a) Entities Involved

Participants identified **Ansar Allah (Houthis)** as responsible for an **extensive** number of compound violations (87.72%). For **government forces**, 3.51% of participants said they committed violations “extensively” as well, while 56.14% of participants stated they committed violations “often,” and 40.35% said “never.” For the **Southern Transitional Council (STC)**: 19.30% stated “extensively,” while 38.60% said “often,” and 42.11% said “never.” For the **Joint forces (west coast)**, 5.26% stated “extensively,” 47.37% stated “often,” and 47.37% said “never.” For **extremist organizations**, 24.56% of participants stated that they commit violations “extensively,” while 42.11% said “often,” and 33.33% said “never.” For **smaller armed groups**, 14.04% said “extensively,” 49.12% said “often,” and 36.84% said “never.”

24.56% of respondents stated that terrorist organizations committed compound violations against children frequently, 42.11% said often, and 33.33% said. This is attributed to the fact that the five targeted governorates are not incubators for extremist organizations, except for a short period of time in Aden, Taiz, and Marib during the first years of the war.¹⁷

b) Order of Violations by Actor

Textual analysis of 151 coded responses across governorates indicates the most recurrent starting violations were **recruitment/use of children in armed forces or groups** (29.14%; 44/151), followed by **killing** (23.84%; 36/151), then **attacks on schools** (15.23%; 23/151) and **sexual exploitation** (15.23%; 23/151). The ordering varies by governorate (e.g., killing ranked highest in Marib and Aden; school attacks higher in Hodeidah and Marib; sexual assaults notable in Aden and Taiz; and arbitrary detention prominent in Dhamar). **Forced recruitment**

¹⁵ *ibid*

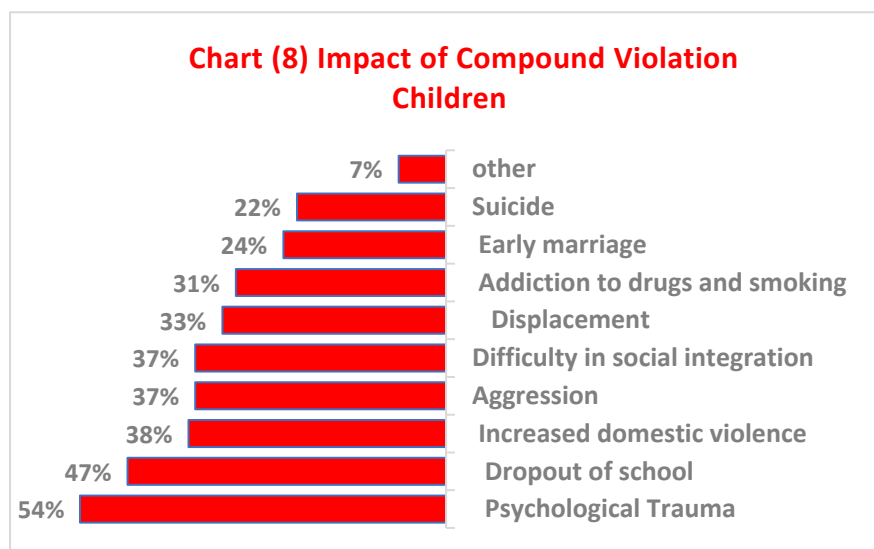
¹⁶ Ebrahim Yahya Saleh Sheikh, Salim Alshageri, & Mohammed Abdullah Hamood Hamid Hamood, Factors influencing children armed recruitment in Yemen, Taylor & Francis Online Volume 8, 2022 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23311886.2022.2108137#abstract>

¹⁷ Crisis Group, Yemen’s al-Qaeda: Expanding the Base, 02 February 2017

appears to be the **primary gateway** violation across actors with other violations as extensions/consequences, followed by killing, attacks on schools, and sexual abuse.

Table 2: Monitored response statistics for the order of violations committed by actors

Compound Violation	Statistical Element	Governorate Level					Study Community Level
		Hodiedah	Taiz	Dhamar	Aden	Mareb	
Denial of Aids	Rate	5.60%	14.50%	-	-	2.80%	6.62%
	Recurrence	1	8	0	0	1	10
Arbitrary Detention	Rate	-	5.40%	13.80%	3.00%	-	5.30%
	Recurrence	0	3	4	1	0	8
Injury/ Maiming	Rate	-	7.30%	3.40%	3.00%	2.80%	4.64%
	Recurrence	0	4	1	1	1	7
Sexual abuse	Rate	11.20%	14.60%	13.70%	21.20%	5.60%	15.23%
	Recurrence	2	8	4	7	2	23
Attacks on schools	Rate	22.20%	9.10%	13.80%	9.10%	19.40%	15.23%
	Recurrence	4	5	4	3	7	23
Killing	Rate	22.20%	16.40%	17.20%	24.20%	27.80%	23.84%
	Recurrence	4	9	5	8	10	36
Recruitment	Rate	27.80%	12.70%	27.60%	33.30%	36.10%	29.14%
	Recurrence	5	7	8	11	13	44
Total	Rate	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Recurrence	16	44	26	31	34	151



4) Impacts of Compound Violations

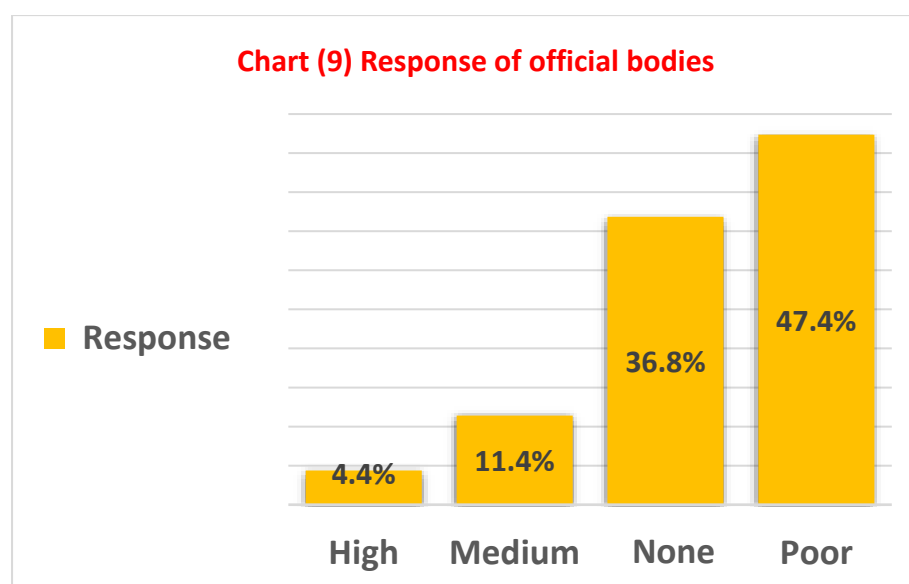
a) Key impacts: Top impacts reported: **psychological trauma** (54%); **school dropout** (47%); **increased domestic violence** (38%); **aggression/social integration difficulties** (37% each); **displacement** (33%); **drug/tobacco addiction** (31%); **early/forced marriage** (24%); **suicide** (22%); and other effects (7%) such as victims repeating violations against others, disability, erosion of tolerance, flight/absconding, and escalation of conflict. Trauma is the **central axis** feeding into other harms.

b) Compound vs. single-violation impact

Respondents stressed that compound violations have **heightened, chronic, and compounded** effects — destroying children’s psychological and social fabric, increasing stigma, isolation, and mental disorders — compared to single violations, which may be more limited and treatable with timely intervention.¹⁸ Pairings like recruitment + sexual assault inflict **double trauma**, eroding trust and future integration; sequences like abduction → recruitment → maiming often leave permanent disabilities and social stigma, driving family breakdown, dropout, aggression, suicide risk, and re-exploitation.¹⁹

5) Interventions by State Bodies and Civil Society & Their Domains

a) State-Actor Interventions



Per 36.8% of responses, state interventions are **absent**; **weak** (47.4%); **medium** (11.4%); **high** (4.4%). Weakness stems from fragile institutions instrumentalized by conflict actors.

¹⁸ Interviewed on 17 July 2025.

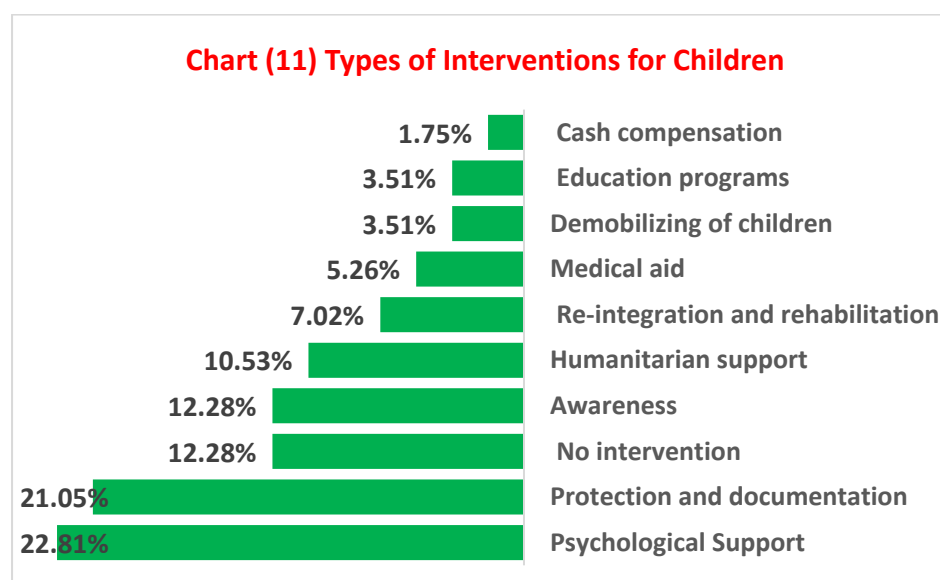
¹⁹ Ibid

b) Civil-society intervention

CSO efforts were rated **weak** (48.5%), **absent** (28.7%), **medium** (19.3%), and **high** (3.5%). Programming is often limited, urban-centric, and under-resourced relative to needs.

c) Barriers to CSO interventions

Only 33.33% said CSOs **re-document** subsequent violations against the same victim; 28.7% said **never**; 38.6% “to some extent.” Barriers include: noncooperation of victims; unawareness of subsequent violations; stopping documentation at the first violation; lack of funds for follow-up; non-systematic documentation; and poor case follow-through. On whether CSO pressure reduced violations: 10.53% stated **yes**; 49.12% said **no**; 40.35% of participants indicated that it was **somewhat effective** — reflecting limited reach and the rarity of programs tailored to compound violations.



d) Forms of Assistance Provided

Most cited: **psychosocial support** (22.81%); **protection/documentation** (21.05%); **awareness-raising** (12.28%); **humanitarian aid** (10.53%); **reintegration/rehabilitation** (7.02%); **medical aid** (5.26%); and others. The prominence of psychosocial support aligns with trauma’s central role. Reintegration to **prevent recurrence** (e.g., demobilization of child soldiers) remains limited, and a notable share believed **no interventions** reached victims — an alarming gap for donors.

Recommendations

To Civil-Society Organizations

- Build documentation teams' capacity to **track multiple/sequential violations**; expand rural and de facto authority-controlled coverage; design tools to capture **temporal/sequential** dimensions.
- Establish **safe, confidential reporting** mechanisms; **electronically archive** data with coded records enabling recall when subsequent violations occur.
- Pair documentation with **immediate assistance** (psychosocial care, rehabilitation, alternative education, economic support), ensuring continuity with donors.
- Integrate **psychologists/social workers** in investigative teams to ensure child-sensitive procedures and safe environments.
- Expand partnerships with **local reporters** (teachers, community leaders, health/education workers); encourage **schools** to report.
- Prioritize **Muhamasheen** and **rural** communities; adopt **early-warning** approaches; and employ survivor **storytelling** and community healing.
- Ensure **survivor voices** guide program design, and invest in **education support** as a primary protection gateway.
- Run child-focused **self-protection** awareness and family campaigns on recruitment risks, cooperation in documentation, and rebuilding **trust** in security/justice bodies.

To Government Bodies

- Create **specialized child-violation units** in police/prosecution, staffed by trained personnel; coordinate security, health, education, and CSOs.
- Reactivate **child/youth offices** within local authorities.
- Promote public awareness and post **signage** in law-enforcement facilities on the six grave violations and how to safely report.
- Train and deploy **juvenile police** across high-risk areas.
- Establish **child-protection/rehabilitation centers** and reintegration pathways.

To International Organizations & Donors

- Fund integration of **digital documentation tools** within government bodies, and support a **national database** on grave violations against children.
- Support creation of a **National Child-Rights Violations Observatory**, including government and CSO representatives to document cases, analyze patterns, and recommend policy/legislative reforms.
- UNICEF and others should transfer **investigation and data-collection know-how** to local CSOs and fund documentation initiatives.
- Increase funding, prioritizing **direct victim support** over administrative overhead.
- Scale **psychosocial and social-reintegration** programs for child victims.

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