

## Report Finds YPG Recruits Child Soldiers

The annual report on Trafficking in Persons, issued by the DoS on June 25, notes that the SDF's Kurdish components have recruited children into their ranks from displacement camps in northeastern Syria. The report states that in June 2019 the SDF "took steps to end the recruitment and use of children and demobilize children within SDF ranks after adopting a UNSCR-mandated action plan."<sup>613</sup> Considerable additional detail on the SDF's actions to end the use of child soldiers subject was provided in the DoS Country Report on Human Rights Conditions section for Syria for 2019, issued in March 2020, but the report also notes allegations that children were still being forcibly conscripted and that at least one 14-year-old boy was killed in the fighting in Baghouz in early 2019.<sup>614</sup> Each year's edition of the DoS Country Reports on Human Rights Practices since 2014 have contained similar promises by Kurdish entities partnered with the United States to end the use of child soldiers, and each report notes that their use apparently continued.<sup>615</sup>

The DoS Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs/Office of Levant Affairs (NEA/LEV) reported that "every time we have heard of individual cases of recruitment under the age of 18" the issue was raised to the SDF command for resolution, and that they assessed "this issue is limited more to the YPG rather than the SDF or internal security forces as a whole."<sup>616</sup>