

UN SECURITY COUNCIL HOLDS DEBATE ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT, CONDEMNS VIOLATIONS AGAINST CHILDREN, CALLS ON STATES TO END IMPUNITY AND HOLD PERPETRATORS TO ACCOUNT

New York City, 17 June 2013 – Today, the United Nations Security Council held a Debate on the issue of children and armed conflict. At the Debate, the Security Council adopted a presidential statement condemning violations of international law against children in armed conflict and calling on States to hold persistent perpetrators of violations to account.

The Debate on Children and Armed Conflict took place on the basis of the UN Secretary-General's [12th Report on Children and Armed Conflict](#). The Secretary-General submits an annual report to the Security Council on the situation of children in armed conflict around the world.

The Secretary-General's Report lists 55 armed forces and armed groups as having committed violations against children. 29 of these are persistent perpetrators, having been listed for a period of five years or more. Contrary to last year's report, no listed parties were removed after the completion of an action plan. Three armed groups active in Mali, MUJAO, MNL, and Ansar Dine, were listed for recruitment and use, and for rape and other forms of sexual violence. In Syria, the Syrian Free Armed was listed for recruitment and use of children as child soldiers, whereas the Syrian government forces are now listed for killing and maiming, attacks on schools and hospitals, and rape and other forms of sexual violence.

Watchlist Executive Director Eva Smets welcomed the statement. "Today's Presidential Statement sends an important signal of the international community's commitment to this issue. In the statement, the Council stresses that ending impunity and holding perpetrators accountable is a crucial element in halting and preventing violations and abuses against children. It goes on to highlight the role of the International Criminal Court in this regard – which is a first in a Council document on children and armed conflict," said Smets.

However, Smets continued saying that there are important elements missing from the Statement. "Of the 55 perpetrators listed in the Secretary-General's report, 46 are armed non-State groups. Some of these groups have sought to conclude an action plan with the United Nations, but have been prevented from doing so. Yet, the Statement does not include a call on Member States to allow the United Nations independent access to non-State armed groups for dialogue and action plan conclusion."

Smets further commented on another issue missing: "The Secretary-General's report highlights the widespread, intentional targeting of schools, teachers and students, and the practice of using schools for military purposes. Education-related violations occur in 19 out of the 22 country situations in the Secretary-General's report, including school bombings and threats against students and teachers."

Today's Debate was held in a more closed format than earlier years. "This is the first time the Council has chosen for the more restricted format of a 'public' debate instead of an 'open' Debate" said Smets. "We regret this decision. An 'open' debate offers the opportunity for all world leaders to speak out against grave violations perpetrated against children in war, and send a strong message to potential and actual perpetrators that the international community is watching, and ready to respond."



[Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#), established in 2001, is an international network of non-governmental organizations striving to end violations against children in armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. As a global network, Watchlist builds partnerships among local, national and international NGOs, enhancing mutual capacities and strengths. Working together, we strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a project of Tides Center, a non-profit public charity.

Website: www.watchlist.org

Follow us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/Watchlist

Follow us on twitter: www.twitter.com/1612Watchlist

Contact:

Eva Smets

evas@watchlist.org

Tel. +1-212-972-0539

Mobile +1-646-943-3798