



PRESS RELEASE

UN Security Council Must Step Up Measures to Protect Children from Violations by Armed Forces and Groups

New York, September 8, 2014 – The United Nations (UN) Security Council and Member States participating in today’s Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict should strongly condemn violations against children by government armed forces and non-state armed groups, and act to safeguard children’s rights and security, said Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict.

“This year’s second Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict comes at a time when children are increasingly impacted by armed conflicts around the world,” said Lisa Sherman-Nikolaus, Advocacy Officer at Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. “It is important that violators of children’s rights know that the world is watching. If they do not conform to international law, they will be named, shamed, and held accountable.”

The open debate follows the publication of the [Secretary-General’s 13th Annual Report on Children and Armed Conflict](#). The Secretary-General’s report lists 59 parties to armed conflict who have been found by the UN to perpetrate grave violations against children. Of these parties, 51 are armed non-state actors and eight are government security forces. Thirty-one parties have been in the annexes for at least five consecutive years and are therefore considered persistent perpetrators. Boko Haram in Nigeria is one of the eight new parties listed in this year’s report. Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict released a report on September 4th entitled [“Who Will Care for Us?” Grave Violations Against Children in Northeastern Nigeria](#), detailing accounts of recruitment and use of children, abductions, and attacks on schools by Boko Haram.

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict urged the Security Council to consider designating abductions as a “trigger” for listing additional perpetrators in the Secretary-General’s annual report. In addition to the nearly 300 girls abducted from Chibok, northeast Nigeria in April, other mass abductions of children took place in 2014 in Syria and Iraq. The Security Council has established six grave violations against children, but only four have been designated as “triggers” for listing of perpetrators: recruitment and use of child soldiers, killing and maiming, rape and other forms of sexual violence, and attacks on schools and hospitals. The other two violations, abductions and denial of humanitarian assistance, are currently not triggers.

“Abductions are often the precursor to the other violations against children, such as use as child soldiers or rape and sexual violence,” said Sherman-Nikolaus. “However, abductions are not always associated with other grave violations, and can affect large numbers of children in horrific ways without triggering a listing in the Secretary-General’s report.”



Today's debate is the second Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict to be held in 2014. The first debate took place on March 8th, and resulted in the unanimous adoption of Security Council Resolution 2143, which provided concrete measures to Member States on how to prevent the military use of schools. A new Security Council resolution will not be adopted during this debate, however the debate presents an opportunity for the Security Council and Member States to provide recommendations on how to strengthen the children and armed conflict agenda, including by expanding the triggers to include abductions.

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Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, established in 2001, is an international network of human rights and humanitarian non-governmental organizations striving to end violations against children in armed conflict 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 conflict 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.

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