



ACTIVISTS FROM WAR ZONES DEMAND BETTER PROTECTION FOR CHILDREN

November 6, 2002, New York, NY...Activists from conflict areas are gathering in New York on 8 November to urge the United Nations Security Council and others to improve protection for children in armed conflicts around the world. Increasingly, children are both victims and active participants of today's wars; they are forced to flee their homes, become child soldiers and suffer other abuses.

Adolescent researchers from Sierra Leone, a former girl child soldier and an activist working to free abducted children in northern Uganda will all speak at a symposium hosted by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict and the Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, with the support from the Human Security Network.

The gathering at UNICEF House will also bring together representatives from national governments, UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and academics to discuss how policy makers can implement promises to protect children in war zones. The symposium is being held in advance of a 20 November debate at the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict.

The speakers are in New York from 6 November and are available for interviews:

- **Angelina Acheng Atyam** is the co-founder and Chair of northern Uganda's Concerned Parents Association, an organization advocating for the release of over 14,000 children abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) over the past 17 years. Angelina, whose own daughter was abducted by the LRA, has met with government, religious, UN and other leaders to secure the release of the abducted children and promote peace in Uganda.
- **Fatmata Binta Barrie, 16; Mohamed Alie Kanu, 18; Samai Brima, 19; and Abibatu Samba, 17;** are all war-affected adolescents from Sierra Leone who participated in a 2002 research study on the situation of youth in post-war Sierra Leone. The adolescents- one of whom is a child mother and another a former child soldier - are speaking out about key concerns facing adolescents in Sierra Leone and solutions to their problems.
- **China Keitetsi, 25,** is a former girl child soldier from Uganda who was separated from her parents at age nine. She was forced to fight for the Ugandan National Resistance Army in the mid-1980s and now recounts her experience in a new book. She will be in the United States until 26 November.