

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

*** To view the open letter: <http://watchlist.org/wp-content/uploads/an-open-letter-to-un-secretary-1-june-2017.pdf>

UN SECRETARY-GENERAL MUST LIST ALL PERPETRATORS OF CHILDREN’S RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN WAR

Civil Society Organizations Urge the Secretary-General Not to ‘Freeze’ Annual List of Perpetrators for the First Time; ‘Freeze’ Would Set Dangerous Precedent

NEW YORK, June 2, 2017 – The UN Secretary-General must publish an accurate and credible list of perpetrators of grave violations in his upcoming 2017 annual report on children and armed conflict, a group of 41 civil society organizations said today in an open letter.

The [open letter](#) reacts to the Secretary-General’s reported - and unprecedented - decision to ‘freeze’ the addition of warring parties that have been found to commit grave violations against children to his 2017 annual report.

“The UN Secretary-General must hold all perpetrators of grave violations against children in war responsible by listing them in his annual report,” said Eva Smets, Executive Director of Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. “Our organizations firmly believe that the list should be impartial, based on UN-verified evidence, and with all parties held to the same standard.”

In the past two years, certain countries have exercised undue pressure, including threats to withdraw UN funding, to avoid being listed in the Secretary-General’s annual reports despite UN-verified evidence documenting grave violations of children’s rights. Just last year, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon faced pressure from Saudi Arabia to remove the Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces from his list. The Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces had originally been listed for killing and maiming children and attacks against schools and hospitals in Yemen.

“Freezing the list would let perpetrators off the hook yet again,” said Smets. “In the face of widespread impunity, the UN should not ‘freeze’ new additions to the list, but ensure that it includes all perpetrators, without exceptions.”

NOTES:

- ***What is the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict?***
At the request of the UN Security Council, the Secretary-General submits an annual report on children and armed conflict that provides information on grave violations committed against children. The reports include annexes listing the names of parties responsible for these violations. The listing of a party in the Secretary-General's reports is not only a 'name and shame' strategy, it also triggers enhanced monitoring and reporting pursuant to Security Council Resolution 1612 (2005). Including parties on the list of perpetrators enhances the protection of children in armed conflict by facilitating UN's engagement with the responsible parties to end grave violations. Once listed, parties may only be removed by signing and implementing a concrete, time bound action plan, negotiated with the UN.
- ***When was it established and why is it important?*** The first report was published in 2002, following a request made by the UN Security Council in Resolution 1379 (2001), which also called for a list of parties to conflict to be included in the annex of the Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict. **The principle of 'naming and shaming' parties to conflict that commit grave violations against children in war is the cornerstone of the Security Council's Children and Armed Conflict agenda.**
- ***Who was listed in last year's report?*** The 2016 annual report covered 20 country situations. After the removal of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces, the list in the annexes of the 2016 report included 59 parties to conflict (8 state security forces and 51 non-state armed groups).

[Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict](#) is a New York-based global coalition that serves to end violations against children in armed conflict and to guarantee their rights.

MEDIA CONTACT:

- Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict: Bonnie Berry; bonnieb@watchlist.org;
1 (212) 972-0695