

WATCH LIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT



2016
ANNUAL REPORT

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Foreword

- The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has painted a grim picture for the world’s children in 2016.¹ A quarter of the world’s school-aged children—462 million—live in countries affected by war and disaster; 17 million of these are refugees or internally displaced; and more than 59 million children of primary school-age are out of school.

In conflict situations, education is often under fire either directly or indirectly, as conflict damages schools and endangers the lives of teachers and students.² Meanwhile, deadly attacks on hospitals and health workers limit children’s access to health care, compounding challenges to children’s health (e.g. increased cases of acute malnutrition, outbreaks of preventable diseases), already exacerbated by months and in some cases years of armed conflict.

In 2016, the UN Secretary-General documented grave violations perpetrated by 60 parties to conflict in 14 conflict-affected situations. Ten of these parties were listed – among other violations – for attacks on schools and hospitals in armed conflict, including the Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces for its attacks on schools and hospitals in Yemen. The UN documented, and verified, 101 incidents of such attacks in Yemen in 2015. Of the attacks, 90 percent caused the complete or partial destruction of schools or health facilities, and 48 percent were attributed to the coalition forces.³

Despite this, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon removed the Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces from his ‘blacklist’ after its publication, claiming Saudi Arabia had threatened to cancel indispensable humanitarian funding for the UN unless it was removed from the report.

¹ UNICEF, “State of the World’s Children 2016. A Fair Chance for Every Child,” March 2017, <https://www.unicef.org/sowc2016/> (accessed March 13, 2017).

² Ibid.

³ UN Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (A/70/836-S/2010/360), April 20, 2016, pp. 27-28.

But, the global community also made strides in protecting children in conflict in 2016. As of February 2017, 59 States have endorsed the Safe Schools Declaration. Through the 'Children, Not Soldiers' campaign initiated by the Special Representative to the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict and UNICEF, all seven governments listed by the Secretary-General for the recruitment and use of children have now signed action plans with the UN to end their violations. Sudan became the last to sign in March of 2016.

In 2016, Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict remained at the forefront of advocacy for children in conflict. Using its Monthly Updates as an advocacy tool with Security Council Members, Watchlist was successful in integrating child protection language into more than twenty-two relevant Security Council resolutions, three Presidential Statements, and all three Working Group conclusions adopted in 2016. Watchlist has also ensured that the protection of children in conflict is mainstreamed into other Security Council resolutions and Presidential Statements, for example, the Security Council's first resolution on human trafficking in conflict, adopted in December 2016.

Within its Partnerships program, Watchlist supported the Coalition against the involvement of boys, girls and youth in armed conflict in Colombia (COALICO), among others, in influencing the peace negotiations held in Havana with the FARC. As a result of this sustained pressure, children and armed conflict provisions now feature prominently within the peace agreement.

With armed conflict still raging in many parts of the world, the organizations that make up our network continue to benefit from the role that Watchlist plays in coordinating NGO advocacy on the children and armed conflict agenda, so that we can speak with one voice.

On behalf of the Members of Watchlist, we thank our partners and funders for their support. Children in conflict around the world need strong, independent voices to speak out, and defend their interests where others remain silent. Thanks to your continued support, Watchlist remains the indispensable player it is, working tirelessly to do more, and better, for children around the world.

JO BECKER,
Chair
Watchlist Advisory Board
representing Human Rights Watch

HIBA QARAMAN,
Vice-Chair
Watchlist Advisory Board
representing Save the Children



1. Advocacy

- In 2016, Watchlist continued to successfully mainstream children and armed conflict priorities across the UN's work through targeted advocacy and policy recommendations based on field inputs from our network members.

Mainstreaming Children and Armed Conflict in the Security Council

A cornerstone of Watchlist's advocacy, our **Children and Armed Conflict Monthly Updates** continue to influence matters of international peace and security that impact children in armed conflict, such as human trafficking in conflict. For example, Watchlist worked with Members of the UN Security Council to successfully ensure inclusion of children affected by armed conflict language in Resolution 2331 (2016), adopted unanimously on December 20, 2016. It requests the UN to come up with plans for better coordination and response to the issue of human trafficking in conflict. Watchlist was particularly pleased to influence the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) mandate renewal in March 2016, and ensure the strongest possible language on children and armed conflict was included, such as a reference to the Security Council Working Group conclusions adopted in February 2016. Watchlist was also able to influence individual country statements at the UNAMA Debate when Resolution 2274 (2016) was adopted in March, ensuring children affected by armed conflict in Afghanistan were prominently featured on the Council's floor. In another

example, Watchlist worked on strengthening the mandates of the UN peace missions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Central African Republic (CAR), Iraq, and Somalia as part of its ongoing mainstreaming work. To inform the work of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, the Advocacy Program conducted its first ever field mission to CAR in the spring of 2016, making targeted recommendations based on firsthand observations.

Watchlist continues to use its **Smartphone application on Children and Armed Conflict** as a mainstreaming tool to provide Security Council diplomats with immediate, updated access to resolution language on children and armed conflict. The app, accessible in English, French, and Arabic, was updated in 2016 with new content and functionality, including access to our Children and Armed Conflict Monthly Updates, a search function, and a feedback tool. It also includes an interactive training tool on attacks on schools and hospitals, aimed at child protection practitioners in the field. More than 5,000 individuals around the world have downloaded the app since it was first launched in 2012.

August 2016 Security Council Open Debate: Safeguarding the Children and Armed Conflict (CAC) Agenda

To further support the CAC agenda, Watchlist conducted advocacy around the August 2, 2016, Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict hosted by Malaysia, influencing country statements in favor of the agenda and the mandate of the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict. This was particularly important given the public controversy surrounding the delisting of the Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces from the annexes of the Secretary-General's 2016 annual report on children and armed conflict.

For the debate, Watchlist focused its efforts on garnering support from Member States for an impartial application of the listing criteria regardless of who the perpetrators are. As a result, 30 out of the 69 intervening delegations expressed their explicit support for the Special Representative to carry out her mandate with impartiality and independence, and 19 delegations discussed the importance of offering the Secretary-General needed support for ensuring impartial, evidence-based listing of perpetrators of grave violations against children. In particular, 1 delegation stressed the importance of accurate and objective facts as a determining factor towards ensuring accountability, and to that end, 22 delegations specifically mentioned the crucial role of the UN-led Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM). Four delegations mentioned the importance of avoiding double standards in the application of listing criteria for safeguarding credibility of the CAC agenda.

The Advocacy Program further conducted broad consultations to influence the new UN Secretary-General's

2017 annual report on children and armed conflict, which presents an opportunity for him to ensure the credibility of the CAC agenda by having an accurate and complete listing of perpetrators of grave violations against children's rights. The outcome of this initiative was made public in early 2017.

Policy Research

In early 2016, Watchlist published its briefing note **Working Methods 2006-2015: Strengthening the Impact of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict**, which reinforced the call on the Security Council to increase the Working Group's effectiveness. This note continues Watchlist's practice of analyzing the working methods of the Security Council's Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict and offering recommendations to strengthen them, with particular regard to the Working Group's toolkit usage and its adoption time of country-specific conclusions.

Watchlist also developed the first ever guidance for mediators for drafting children and armed conflict provisions in peace agreements. Watchlist and its partner the Liechtenstein Institute on Self-Determination at Princeton University brought together mediation and children and armed conflict (CAC) experts in a series of workshops focused on how to best address child protection provisions in peacemaking. The outcome is a **checklist for drafting children and armed conflict provisions in ceasefire and peace agreements (Checklist)**, which was launched at the UN in October 2016 during the 71st UN General Assembly's Rights of the Child Days. The Checklist has been made available on the UN's Peacemaker database, a library of UN-approved reference materials for mediators.

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Watchlist focused its efforts on garnering support from Member States for an impartial application of the listing criteria regardless of who the perpetrators are.



2. Research

- Deadly attacks on hospitals and health workers limit children’s access to health care in times of war, compounding challenges to children’s health, already exacerbated by months and in some cases years of armed conflict.

In July 2016, six hospitals were attacked in Aleppo Governorate,⁴ the highest number the region has experienced in a single week since the war began.⁵ Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) reports that since July 2016, all of the 8 remaining functioning hospitals have been damaged at least once, half of them repeatedly, in at least 19 attacks overall.⁶ In late September during the UN General Assembly, a convoy of 18 trucks loaded with vital medical and humanitarian supplies was attacked in Aleppo Governorate.⁷ According to Physicians for Human Rights, the attack killed approximately 20 people, including aid workers.⁸

These deadly attacks are only a few examples in what is sadly a growing phenomenon, widespread across a number of countries. As the UN Security Council and its Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict consider attacks on health workers and facilities worldwide and their impact on children’s access to health care in conflict, it is essential for nongovernmental organizations to document violations and propose policy options aimed at ending violations to secure safe, healthy, and productive futures for children and bringing perpetrators to justice. In line with Watchlist’s **Strategic Plan for 2016-2018**,

Watchlist’s Field Monitors focus on the documentation of attacks on hospitals and health workers, and their impact on children in situations of armed conflict.

In November and December 2016, Watchlist conducted a research mission in Afghanistan to investigate and shed light on the high number of attacks and military use of health care facilities in the country and to formulate recommendations to help realize children’s right to health care. Watchlist conducted qualitative interviews with more than 80 people for the report, including medical personnel, humanitarian staff, government health professionals, and parents of children directly impacted by attacks as well as the children themselves. In December 2016, Watchlist also conducted a research mission in Yemen to investigate attacks and military use of health care facilities.

In keeping with its thematic focus on attacks on health care, Watchlist joined and actively participated in the Steering Committee of the Safeguarding Health and Conflict Coalition (SHCC) and prepared country and thematic chapters for the SHCC’s 2017 report that will provide a comprehensive study of attacks on health care that occurred in several countries throughout the world in 2016.

⁴ Physicians for Human Rights, “Aleppo Region Suffers Worst Week of Hospital Attacks Since the Syrian Conflict Began,” August 3, 2016, <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/press/press-releases/aleppo-region-suffers-worst-week-of-hospital-attacks-since-syrian-conflict-began.html> (accessed September 23, 2016).

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Médecins Sans Frontières, “Syria, Aleppo: ‘We are Under Attack Almost Every Day; Life has Become Almost Impossible,’” September 9, 2016, <http://www.msf.org/en/article/syria-aleppo-%E2%80%99Cwe-are-under-attack-almost-every-day-life-has-become-almost-impossible%E2%80%9D> (accessed September 23, 2016).

⁷ Physicians for Human Rights, “PHR Condemns Brazen Attacks on Syrian Humanitarian Convoy,” September 20, 2016, <http://physiciansforhumanrights.org/press/press-releases/phr-condemns-brazen-attack-on-syrian-humanitarian-convoy.html> (accessed September 23, 2016).

⁸ Ibid.



3. Partnerships

- In 2016, Watchlist's Partnerships Program supported child rights activists' efforts to monitor and report grave violations against children in situations of armed conflict, while advancing institutional learning and advocacy.

Institutional Learning and Advocacy

In 2016, Watchlist provided training to civil society organizations in Afghanistan and Nigeria based on its **1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism: A Resource Pack for NGOs**, first launched in 2014. Watchlist traveled to Nigeria in January and February 2016 to visit its local partner, provide training to ten human rights activists coming from four emergency states, and follow up on its 2014 Field Monitor report, **"Who Will Care for Us?" Grave Violations against Children in Northeastern Nigeria**. In July, Watchlist visited Kabul, Afghanistan, to conduct training on monitoring, reporting, and response to grave violations against children in the framework of the MRM. Greater knowledge about grave violations strengthens the ability of civil society organizations to gather information necessary to inform the MRM process.

Watchlist released a **Spanish language version** of its Resource Pack on September 12, which has been distributed by our partner, COALICO.

Last but not least, Watchlist published a global policy report **The United Nations' 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism: Lessons from Colombia and South Sudan** in August 2016. The report is based on field research regarding the implementation of the MRM

in Colombia and South Sudan. The field research was conducted in 2015, ten years after the adoption of Security Council Resolution 1612 establishing the Mechanism. In undertaking this research, Watchlist's aim was to highlight what is working well in the implementation of the MRM and offer recommendations to improve the mechanism's effectiveness.

Projects with Child Rights Organizations

Watchlist's support to civil society organizations provides an opportunity to put policy into practice and to respond to the needs and expectations of victims on the ground. Since its inception, Watchlist has supported more than 27 civil society organizations around the world to monitor abuses and advocate for children in conflict. Through its "Watchlist Fund," Watchlist provides partners with financial and technical support, as well as opportunities to collaborate on high-level advocacy events. In turn, Watchlist's partners help build its institutional knowledge on the implementation of the CAC agenda on the ground. In 2016, Watchlist continued its long-standing partnerships with local organizations in Colombia and the DRC, two countries where the MRM is being implemented, and wrapped up a project with a new partner in Nigeria.

In Colombia, Watchlist provides support to COALICO, a civil society coalition working to protect the rights of children affected by the armed conflict. COALICO is a permanent member of the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting. COALICO also trains civil society actors on child rights monitoring and reporting and runs other campaigns to strengthen Colombia's commitments to children's rights. Throughout the peace dialogue, COALICO advocated for children to be prioritized in the peace talks and participated in the technical committee that drafted a Protocol on the release of children. The Protocol was agreed to on September 6 and the FARC began the incremental process to release children from its camps only days later.

In Nigeria, Watchlist supported its partner to participate in the newly formed MRM. Watchlist also conducted a training on the MRM, together with its partner, for local human rights activists from four emergency states. The activists in turn set up trainings in their home states, expanding the field of knowledge about monitoring and reporting child rights violations to a further 91 activists.

In the DRC, Watchlist's local partner, among other activities, conducted dialogue with leaders from armed non-State actors related to international norms on the protection of children, and advocated to secure commitments to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children from those groups. As a result, on Red Hand Day 2016, one such group signed a commitment.





4. Organizational Update

- Established in 2001 by a group of leading human rights and humanitarian organizations, Watchlist was proud to celebrate its 15th anniversary in 2016, commemorated in an event held on Red Hand Day, February 12.

As a network, Watchlist's programmatic content is set by an Advisory Board composed of international nongovernmental organizations. Watchlist's Advisory Board is made up of six distinguished human rights and humanitarian organizations: **Human Rights Watch**, **the Norwegian Refugee Council**, **Save the Children International**, **Terre des Hommes International Federation**, **War Child International**, and **World Vision International**.

Beyond its Advisory Board, Watchlist's network also includes Associate Members which share Watchlist's commitment to protect the security and rights of children affected by armed conflict. In 2016, Watchlist enthusiastically welcomed **Nonviolent Peaceforce** as an Associate Member. Associate Members also include **Child Soldiers International**, **Geneva Call**,

the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, and **the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative**.

In 2016, Watchlist continued to enjoy the support of several donors. We are especially grateful for the support received throughout 2016 from the Governments of Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Watchlist is additionally grateful for support received from a major anonymous donor.

Our partners and funders are critical in their patronage to Watchlist's programs and activities. Their generous support and encouragement enables Watchlist to remain the indispensable player it is in the area of children and armed conflict, making a difference where it really matters.

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Financials

	1/1/2015 through 12/31/2015	1/1/2016 through 12/31/2016
REVENUE		
Public Support		
Grants & Contributions	\$44,390.07	\$369,942.00
Government Grants	\$455,647.77	\$694,488.51
Total Public Support	\$500,037.84	\$1,064,430.51
Other Revenue		
External Revenue	\$5,000.00	\$2,914.36
Total Other Revenue	\$5,000.00	\$2,914.36
Gain/(Loss) on Realized/Unrealized		
Gain/(Loss) on Realized	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Gain/(Loss) on Realized/Unrealized	\$0.00	\$0.00
Net Assets Released from Restriction		
Release of Net Assets	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Net Assets Released from	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Revenue	\$505,037.84	\$1,067,344.87
EXPENSES		
Operating-Personnel		
Wages/Salaries	\$366,588.82	\$340,229.14
Payroll Taxes	\$33,564.68	\$28,833.31
Benefits	\$92,429.36	\$57,918.80
Total Operating-Personnel	\$492,582.86	\$426,981.25
Operating-Non-Personnel		
Professional Services	\$157,732.85	\$172,569.07
Rent	\$71,043.61	\$73,414.79
Utilities	\$21,173.65	\$17,985.52
Other Occupancy Expense	\$0.00	\$279.99
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	\$2,048.70	\$1,617.94
Postage & Express Services	\$1,553.29	\$985.63
Supplies	\$3,768.46	\$10,699.67
Printing & Reference Materials	\$14,371.68	\$9,284.52
Insurance	\$3,500.00	\$3,675.00
Travel & Conferences	\$47,897.11	\$93,728.60
Adjustments & Write-Offs	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total Operating-Non-Personnel	\$323,089.35	\$384,240.73
Grants & Awards		
Grants & Awards-External	\$55,000.00	\$80,690.00
Total Grants & Awards	\$55,000.00	\$80,690.00
Fees		
Internal Fees	\$53,623.38	\$95,415.40
External Fees	(\$189.00)	\$0.00
Total Fees	\$53,434.38	\$95,415.40
Other Expenses		
Depreciation Expense	\$937.23	\$0.00
Communication & Outreach	\$950.01	\$2,000.00
Board Expenses	(\$82.50)	\$0.00
Other Expenses	\$0.00	\$163.69
Total Other Expenses	\$1,804.74	\$2,163.69
Total Expense	\$925,911.33	\$989,491.07
BEGINNING NET ASSETS	\$397,369.44	(\$23,504.05)
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(\$420,873.49)	\$77,853.80
ENDING NET ASSETS	(\$23,504.05)	\$54,349.75



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