



Terms of Reference:

Consultant on Children's Rights and Countering Violent Extremism

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict ('Watchlist') is an international network of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) striving to end violations against children during armed conflicts and to guarantee their rights. We strategically collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts to influence key decision makers, in order to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

Established in 2001, Watchlist is the leading NGO advocacy network working alongside the UN to push the UN's Children and Armed Conflict agenda forward. Watchlist is a fiscally sponsored project of United Charitable, a US-based 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization. An Advisory Board comprised of leading international human rights and humanitarian NGOs provides general supervision, and Watchlist's Associate Members frequently collaborate on advocacy initiatives.

Background:

The use of terror tactics by extremist armed groups has made children more vulnerable in many conflict-affected countries. As a result of these groups' use of indiscriminate weaponry and targeted attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure, thousands of children have been killed and maimed. Extremist armed groups have further seized upon children's vulnerability, targeting them for recruitment and use for support functions, such as transporting improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and carrying out suicide attacks, as well as sexual slavery.

At the same time, measures to counter violent extremism (CVE) have fallen short in safeguarding children, and in many cases, they have violated children's rights. For example, many States have criminalized association with groups deemed "terrorist" or "violent extremist," increasing the number of children detained and prosecuted for association with such groups, and treating children primarily as perpetrators rather than victims. As States, multilateral institutions, and coalitions have focused on combating the security threats posed by violent extremism, all too often they have not fully taken into account the impact on children's rights. As a result, CVE efforts and the counterterrorism agenda may risk eroding existing normative frameworks, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the UN Security Council's resolutions on children and armed conflict (CAC), international humanitarian law, and other norms.

Watchlist is seeking a consultant to contribute to its efforts to strengthen the protection of children's rights in armed conflict, with a focus on efforts to counter violent extremism and their impact on children's rights. The consultant will conduct policy research, which Watchlist will use in its advocacy with members of the Security Council, other UN Member States, UN agencies, and other stakeholders. Through this work, Watchlist seeks to promote a child rights-based approach to CVE and encourage greater accountability of States and multilateral organizations to their international obligations to protect children's rights and uphold juvenile justice standards, in the course of efforts to counter violent extremism.

Specific themes may include, but are not limited to:

- Denial of humanitarian access linked to counterterrorism legislation;
- Detention of children suspected of involvement/association;
- Confinement, internment, and/or other restrictions on freedom of movement;

- Repatriation of foreign children and statelessness of children born to foreign fighters;
- Transitional justice.

Summary of Consultant Duties:

This consultancy has three primary objectives:

1. Research practical and effective means to protect children's rights in efforts to counter violent extremism, including concrete examples of best practices, and craft recommendations to policy makers and other key stakeholders;
2. Convene key stakeholders, including Security Council Member States, other UN Member States, UN offices and agencies, and civil society, in order to improve the understanding of the impact of CVE on children's rights, stressing the need to apply existing normative frameworks in the context of CVE operations and generating recommendations for moving forward in these efforts;
3. Educate broader policy audiences, including practitioners and decision-makers, about the child protection concerns associated with CVE and the need to respect and protect children's rights in the context of such operations.

Expected time frame of consultancy:

Consultancy to commence on or around September 1, 2019, with final deliverable completed and submitted to Watchlist Program Director on or before December 1, 2019. (Approximately 25 days spread out over approximately three months, or until completion of the task.)

PHASE ONE: PLANNING

Desk Research:

- Conduct desk research regarding emerging standards, policies, and practices related to children's rights and CVE.
- Meet with Watchlist Program Director and staff and members of its Advisory Board to preliminarily identify key issues and concerns on which to focus the research and inform the next phase.

PHASE TWO: INFORMATION GATHERING

Stakeholder Interviews:

- Develop a comprehensive list of interviewees including UN representatives, government representatives, NGOs (headquarters and field level), local partners, and others. (Minimum 20 interviews.)
- Develop a standard set of questions for the interviews and guidelines for a minimum set of information that should be obtained from each interview; questions will focus on identifying key themes and recommendations for action.
- Document information obtained in each interview, analyze information, and submit to Watchlist Program Director a brief (5-7 page) summary of key themes and emerging issues that arose from the interviews.

PHASE THREE: REPORT AND CONSULTATION

- Prepare a policy brief for publication by Watchlist, presenting key findings, emerging issues and/or gaps, and recommendations for action.
- The Consultant will circulate the draft report for review and integrate comments from Watchlist staff and Advisory Board Members.

PHASE FOUR: POLICY WORKSHOP

- In consultation with Watchlist staff, plan and organize a side event to present the key findings and recommendations of the research.
- Develop a concept note and draft an agenda for a policy workshop at a later date to facilitate discussion among UN Member States, UN agencies, and other stakeholders on strategies to improve the protection of children's rights in the CVE context.

DELIVERABLES:

1. Summary of desk research (3-5 pages) and summary of meeting with Watchlist staff and Advisory Board (2-3 pages). *To be completed by: September 30, 2019.*
2. Written summary of each stakeholder interview and policy brief (5-7 pages) providing analysis of key themes/emerging issues. *To be completed by: October 31, 2019.*
3. Final report (based on structure described above, approximately 20 pages in length), including a 2-page summary of findings and recommendations. *To be completed by December 1, 2019.*
4. Side event. Consultant will work with Watchlist staff to plan and organize a side event where the Consultant will present the key findings and recommendations to UN Member States, UN agencies, and other stakeholders. *To be completed by December 1, 2019.*

Requirements:

- Master's degree in human rights, international affairs, public policy, or related field;
- Senior child protection professional (10+ years of experience);
- Knowledge of international standards and initiatives regarding violent extremism;
- Knowledge of international human rights and humanitarian law, particularly UN Security Council Resolutions on children and armed conflict and counterterrorism;
- Past experience working with NGOs and/or in the non-profit sector desirable;
- Excellent knowledge of UN system and relevant international and regional organizations.

Compensation:

- Paid in two installments: the first to be paid after the completion of the first two deliverables, and the second to be paid after the completion of deliverables 3 and 4.
- Incidentals as appropriate.

Terms and Conditions:

Terms and conditions will be set in the consultancy contract. The consultant will also be required to sign and adhere to Watchlist's Child Protection Policy and the Watchlist Code of Conduct. Failure to adhere to the policies can result in immediate termination.

To apply, please submit résumé, cover letter detailing relevant experience, and (1) unedited writing sample by July 17, via email to: adriannel@watchlist.org.

Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.