

2015 ANNUAL REPORT





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FOREWORD

According to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 250 million children around the world, approximately one in nine, live in conflict zones, and those living in conflict-affected countries are twice as likely as those in other countries to die of mostly preventable causes before reaching age five.

At least 56 groups fighting in 15 conflicts use child soldiers, and some of these groups employ tactics of extreme violence in their recruitment strategies and their methods and means of warfare. In 2013, for the first time since World War II, the number of people internally displaced or living as refugees from war or persecution exceeded 50 million, with children making up half that number. As a result, the humanitarian system's resources are stretched beyond capacity; it is increasingly challenging for both donors and humanitarian responders to meet ever-growing demands, or effectively address the existing child protection needs.

Last September, the devastating image of Aylan Kurdi, the three-year-old Syrian boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea while his family tried to reach Europe to seek asylum, shocked us all. But let's not forget that today children like Aylan still wash up on Turkish beaches seeking refuge from war. And many more children like Aylan are impacted every day by equally devastating conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR), Afghanistan, South Sudan, and elsewhere around the world.

“ Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict draws on the comparative strengths of its individual members and acts as a unified voice to protect children in war zones.” „

“ In a complex and demanding external environment, our organizations continue to benefit from the role that Watchlist plays in coordinating NGO advocacy with the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict issues. ”

In the midst of these multiple and sometimes protracted emergencies, the world is asking and needing all of us to do much more, and to do it better. In 2016, Watchlist is positioned to build on its formidable and commendable achievements and with the right kind of support and partnerships, do more and better in making child rights a reality.

Watchlist achieved major advocacy successes throughout 2015. Following the publication of our briefing note *Expanding the UN's Children and Armed Conflict Agenda*, highlighting abductions and the detention of children associated with armed groups, UN Security Council members unanimously adopted Resolution 2225, which expanded the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism's listing criteria to include abductions. Watchlist's call for a policy to ban states placed on the Secretary-General's "list of shame" from contributing troops to peacekeeping operations was taken up by the UN following the media coverage of peacekeepers' behavior in CAR.

Watchlist also continued to highlight attacks on schools and the military use of schools in situations of armed conflict around the world. In September, Watchlist published a report on the challenges facing children's access to education in CAR. The transitional government of CAR and 50 other member states from around the world responded to the call of Watchlist, the Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack, and other partners to strengthen the safety of schools, students, and teachers by adopting the Safe Schools Declaration.

In a complex and demanding external environment, our organizations continue to benefit from the role that Watchlist plays in coordinating NGO advocacy with the UN Security Council on children and armed conflict issues. Watchlist continues to serve its Advisory Board, which includes Human Rights Watch, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Save the Children International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, War Child International, and World Vision International, as well as its Associate Members, Child Soldiers International, Geneva Call, and the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative. Watchlist enthusiastically welcomed the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect as an Associate Member in 2015.

Last but not least, on behalf of the Advisory Board, we thank our partners and funders for their support. Children caught up in violent conflicts around the world need strong, independent voices to speak out on their behalf. With your continued support, Watchlist will remain the indispensable player it is, always striving to do more for children, and to do it better.



JO BECKER,
Chair
Watchlist Advisory Board
representing Human Rights Watch



DEBRA JONES,
Vice-Chair
Watchlist Advisory Board
representing Save the Children



ADVOCACY to ADVANCE the CHILDREN and ARMED CONFLICT AGENDA

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In 2015, Watchlist's Advocacy Program raised the bar on its mainstreaming of child protection concerns in the UN Security Council, and the year was marked by significant advocacy wins that impacted global policy.

Mainstreaming CAC in the Security Council

Watchlist's **Children and Armed Conflict Monthly Updates** (CAC Monthly Updates), now entering their third year of publication, continue to be the key vehicle for mainstreaming children and armed conflict concerns throughout the Security Council's work. Through them, Watchlist makes targeted recommendations based on up-to-date field inputs from its network organizations for Security Council members to take up in relevant resolution negotiations, and high-level briefings and consultations. In May 2015, Watchlist influenced Resolution 2220 on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which focused on the human cost of proliferation of illegal weapons. Watchlist worked closely with the leading Security Council member and several interested states to develop and mainstream language on children for the resolution. Another example of a mainstreaming success through the CAC Monthly Updates was achieved during the UN's Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali's (MINUSMA) mandate renewal (Resolution 2164). Watchlist successfully contributed new language on the protection of schools and unlawful and arbitrary detention of children, currently among the top child protection issues in Mali.

As another tool for mainstreaming, Watchlist's **smartphone application on Children and Armed Conflict** continues to provide Security Council diplomats with immediate, updated access to resolution language on CAC. In 2015, Watchlist increased the app's accessibility by launching it in two new languages: French and Arabic. To date, 4,931 individuals worldwide use the application to access guidance without having to solicit lengthy reports. In November 2015, the application received the first annual Geneva Centre for Security Policy's Prize for Innovation in Global Security for an extension proposal that includes a search function and interactive trainings on attacks on schools, among other new features.

Addressing Children and Armed Conflict Concerns in UN-wide Policies on Accountability

Beginning in August 2014, Watchlist has been lobbying for the UN to develop a policy that would ban government security forces placed on the Secretary-General's "list of shame" from contributing troops to peacekeeping operations. In 2015, Watchlist's recommendation for this policy was taken up by the High-level Independent Panel on UN Peace Operations (HIPPO), established by

“ Watchlist succeeded in lobbying the UN to take a proactive stance on banning listed states from contributing troops to peacekeeping. ”

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon to make a comprehensive assessment of the state of UN peace operations. Through proactive follow up, Watchlist and its partners influenced the Secretary-General's report in response to the HIPPO recommendations. Paragraph 127 of the Secretary-General's report includes language supporting the idea that those countries on the “list of shame” would be formally notified and asked to provide details on immediate priority actions; the failure to end systematic violations and implement action plans expeditiously would lead to their non-participation in peacekeeping. Through the Secretary-General's official call, Watchlist succeeded in lobbying the UN to take a proactive stance on banning security forces on the “list of shame” from contributing troops to peacekeeping. Watchlist continues to follow up on the implementation of this recommended action by the UN at present.

Security Council Open Debates on Children and Armed Conflict

Accompanying its ongoing mainstreaming work through proactive advocacy, Watchlist continues to prompt normative growth of the Security Council's CAC agenda.

In 2015, the Security Council held two open debates on children and armed conflict. The first debate held in March under the Presidency of France was not followed by an outcome document, but Watchlist was able to influence the number, quality, and coherence of country statements supportive of the agenda implementation. Watchlist's advocacy efforts particularly contributed toward paving the way for further expansion of the CAC agenda by sensitizing member states to the call for the Secretary-General to add abductions as the fifth “trigger” for inclusion of parties into the annexes of his annual CAC reports.

In June 2015, a second Open Debate held under the Presidency of Malaysia, current Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC), resulted in the unanimous adoption of Resolution 2225 (2015). To influence this outcome document, Watchlist released a briefing note focusing

on abductions and detention of children associated with armed groups (see below). During the resolution negotiations, Watchlist worked closely with Malaysia and other friendly member states to ensure recommendations from the note were included in the resolution. Ultimately, the key success of the resolution was adding abductions as the fifth “trigger.”

Policy Research

To coincide with the March 2015 Open Debate, Watchlist published its annual briefing note **Working Methods 2006-2014: 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 providing updated analyses of the working methods of the SCWG-CAAC by offering recommendations to strengthen them, with particular regard to toolkit usage, and adoption times of country-specific conclusions.

Ahead of the June 2015 Security Council Open Debate bearing a new resolution on CAC, Watchlist published a briefing note entitled **Expanding the UN's Children and Armed Conflict Agenda**. In the note, Watchlist highlighted abductions of children in situations of armed conflict and the detention of children allegedly associated with armed forces or groups, through examination of the Secretary-General's annual reports from 2002 to 2014. In this note, Watchlist recommended expansion of the listing criteria to include abductions as an important step towards enhancing the international community's ability to protect children and hold perpetrators to account. Drawing attention to the detention of children, Watchlist also urged all parties to ensure that children associated with armed groups or forces are treated primarily as victims, whose treatment should focus on maximizing their potential for effective rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The briefing note served as a basis for advocacy by Watchlist and key UN partners towards expanding the CAC agenda by adding abductions as a trigger for listing parties in the Secretary-General's “list of shame.”



FIELD MONITORS

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Between April and May 2015, Watchlist conducted a five-week research mission in the Central African Republic (CAR) to investigate and shed light on the high number of attacks and military use of schools in the country and to formulate recommendations to help realize children's right to education. Watchlist conducted qualitative interviews with 178 people, including students, parents, teachers, government officials, representatives from peacekeeping missions, and representatives from armed groups, as part of its investigation into 29 alleged threats of attacks, attacks, and/or military use of schools between late 2012 and May 2015.

Watchlist launched its new report **Vulnerable Students, Unsafe Schools: Attacks and Military Use of Schools in the Central African Republic** at a press conference at UN headquarters in New York in September 2015. Watchlist also presented the report at high-level meetings with the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict (SCWG-CAAC), the Group of Friends on 1612 in New York, and at a UN-NGO briefing. In addition, Watchlist met with relevant ambassadors and representatives from donor countries to discuss actions they could take in response to these violations. Shortly after the launch, Watchlist conducted advocacy with the United States government in Washington, DC, with stakeholders in Geneva, and with French government officials in Paris. Watchlist was unable to launch the report in CAR due to a

rapid escalation of violence during the anticipated travel period, but disseminated the report and key findings to stakeholders electronically and over the phone.

A survey of media around the time of the report launch showed that the report was picked up by the Associated Press, Reuters, Agence France-Press, Voice of America, and the Post Internazionale (Italy). The global campaign "A World at School" additionally highlighted the report in a blog article. The research officer was also interviewed for the Voice of America television program Africa 54.

In addition to sensitizing key stakeholders, Watchlist helped to encourage greater reporting on these violations by key UN bodies. Watchlist also coordinated with a group of eight international and national child protection actors

to advocate for the transitional government of CAR to endorse the Safe Schools Declaration. The government signed on to the Declaration in June 2015. Soon after, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Education Cluster in CAR outlined a strategy to help support the Declaration's implementation.

Watchlist also discussed these violations with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and suggested ways it could strengthen its response. MINUSCA has since developed guidelines aimed at preventing the use of schools by its troops and minimizing the impact of armed conflict on the security and education of children.

Finally Watchlist received a letter from UNICEF indicating that it would carefully consider the monitor's recommendations. Following the research, the Education Cluster in CAR, coordinated by UNICEF, took several steps to reactivate its reporting on attacks on schools and have it listed as one of the cluster's key activities in the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan. UNICEF has also launched EduTrac, a short message service (SMS) that allows school staff to alert UNICEF of security threats and incidents at their schools by text. In addition, in April 2015, UNICEF led the establishment of a working group on education and peace. The group's goals include the development of mechanisms to protect schools, education personnel, and students against violations. The Education Cluster also plans to strengthen its link with the Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM) by holding an MRM training workshop for the cluster in the first quarter of 2016.



Photo: Reuters/Parwiz Parwiz
Photo top right: Reuters/John Vizcaino



PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM

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In 2015, Watchlist's Partnerships Program supported child rights activists' efforts to monitor, report, and advocate against grave violations perpetrated against children in situations of armed conflict, while advancing institutional learning and advocacy.

Institutional Learning and Advocacy

In May 2015, Watchlist launched its second edition of **The 1612 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism. A Resource Pack for NGOs**. The new edition is available in English, French, and Arabic, and further integrates best practices and key learning gathered during dissemination of the first edition through trainings in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, and South Sudan. The Resource Pack reflects years' of Watchlist learning on the MRM as an institution, gained through sustained collaboration with civil society partners in the field. Watchlist publishes its learning with the aim to support meaningful civil society participation in the UN-led MRM as a means to strengthen both the mechanism itself, as well as its sustainable impact on the security and rights of children in conflict.

Projects with Child Rights Organizations

Since its inception, Watchlist has supported 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 base. In 2015,

Watchlist supported long-standing partners in DRC and Colombia, and expanded to Nigeria.

In DRC, Watchlist's partner conducted advocacy with local self-defense groups to foster greater commitment for the protection of children affected by conflict. The groups' advocacy generated greater awareness of international norms on the protection of children in conflict, and the responsibility of armed groups to uphold the protection of civilians more generally.

In Colombia, Watchlist provides support to COALICO, a civil society coalition working to protect the rights of children affected by the armed conflict. COALICO represents civil society in the MRM as 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. COALICO has worked to ensure youth are considered in the ongoing peace dialogue between the government and the FARC.

In Nigeria, Watchlist's support enables its partner to participate in the newly formed MRM by monitoring and reporting child rights violations in the regions affected by the conflict with Boko Haram, and allows Watchlist to continue engagement initiated through its 2014 Field Monitor report.



ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATE

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Established in 2001 by a group of leading human rights and humanitarian organizations, Watchlist was proud to celebrate its 14th year of existence in 2015. Since 2012, Watchlist has been a fiscally-sponsored project of Tides Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and the largest fiscal sponsor in the US. Watchlist does not receive direct financial support from Tides Center.

As a network, Watchlist's programmatic content is set by an Advisory Board composed of international non-governmental organizations. The Advisory Board shares fiduciary responsibility for Watchlist's staff, programs, fundraising, and finances with Tides Center's Board. 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 2015, Watchlist enthusiastically welcomed the **Global Centre for the**

Responsibility to Protect, which joined **Child Soldiers International, Geneva Call, and The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative**, as an Associate Member.

In 2015, Watchlist continued to enjoy the support of several donors. We are especially grateful for the support received throughout 2015 from the governments of Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, Watchlist is grateful for support received from The Funding Network and 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.

“The generous support and encouragement received from our partners and our funders enables Watchlist to remain the indispensable player it is in the area of children and armed conflict.” „

FINANCIALS

1/1/2014 through 12/31/2014

1/1/2015 through 12/31/2015

REVENUE		
Public Support		
Grants & Contributions	\$521,550.00	\$44,390.07
Government Grants	\$531,031.71	\$430,647.77
Total Public Support	\$1,052,581.71	\$475,037.84
Other Revenue		
External Revenue	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
Total Other Revenue	\$0.00	\$5,000.00
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	\$1,052,581.71	\$480,037.84
EXPENSES		
Operating-Personnel		
Wages/Salaries	\$332,496.47	\$366,588.82
Payroll Taxes	\$30,066.58	\$33,564.68
Benefits	\$93,275.70	\$92,429.36
Total Operating-Personnel	\$455,838.75	\$492,582.86
Operating-Non-Personnel		
Professional Services	\$82,051.87	\$157,732.85
Rent	\$65,825.16	\$70,919.27
Utilities	\$17,487.78	\$21,173.65
Other Occupancy Expense	\$0.00	\$0.00
Equipment Rental & Maintenance	\$2,546.46	\$2,173.04
Postage & Express Services	\$2,452.46	\$1,553.29
Supplies	\$3,061.63	\$3,768.46
Printing & Reference Materials	\$14,269.32	\$14,371.68
Insurance	\$2,000.00	\$3,500.00
Travel & Conferences	\$83,245.65	\$47,897.11
Adjustments & Write-Offs	\$11.00	\$0.00
Total Operating-Non-Personnel	\$272,951.33	\$323,089.35
Grants & Awards		
Grants & Awards-External	\$42,300.00	\$55,000.00
Total Grants & Awards	\$42,300.00	\$55,000.00
Fees		
Internal Fees	\$103,817.95	\$50,362.51
External Fees	\$189.00	(\$189.00)
Total Fees	\$104,006.95	\$50,173.51
Other Expenses		
Depreciation Expense	\$1,124.67	\$937.23
Communication & Outreach	\$294.99	\$950.01
Board Expenses	\$82.50	(\$82.50)
Other Expenses	\$3,563.12	\$0.00
Total Other Expenses	\$5,065.28	\$1,804.74
Total Expense	\$880,162.31	\$922,650.46
BEGINNING NET ASSETS	\$224,950.04	\$397,369.44
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	\$172,419.40	(\$442,612.62)
ENDING NET ASSETS	\$397,369.44	(\$45,243.18)

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict

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