

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Child Rights Organizations Welcome UN Secretary-General's 2017 List of Perpetrators of Grave Violations against Children**

**Secretary-General's Annual Report Names 64 Perpetrators for Abuse and Exploitation of Children in Conflict, including the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition in Yemen**

**NEW YORK, October 5, 2017** – Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict today welcomed the UN Secretary-General's annual report on children and armed conflict, and said naming perpetrators of grave violations against children is a critical first step in holding them accountable and preventing future attacks.

Watchlist has [documented violations in Yemen](#) by the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition, which is among the 64 parties listed as responsible for violations of children's rights in conflict in the report. Taking a courageous stance for children, UN Secretary-General António Guterres released the document today.

“Naming perpetrators responsible for attacks on children is a critical first step in correcting these wrongs,” said Eva Smets, Watchlist's executive director. “The UN must now work with the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition and other parties to ensure these horrific violations of vulnerable children are never repeated.”

In addition to the Saudi Arabia-led Coalition, the report also lists the Iraqi Popular Mobilization Forces and Syrian Government forces for recruiting and using children.

But, the report omits [some of the perpetrators Watchlist earlier said should be listed](#). These include the Pakistani Taliban for attacks on schools, the Israel Defense Forces for killing and maiming of children and attacks on schools and hospitals, and Kurdish Groups for recruitment and use in Iraq. The report does not address the situation of children in Ukraine or Burundi at all.

This year, the Secretary-General singled out parties that have taken measures to improve the protection of children. Watchlist asks for these ‘measures’ to be publicly documented, and carefully monitored for clear impact.

Listing all perpetrators of child rights violations is critical because it creates pressure on the responsible parties to comply with international law. More than 25 governments and non-state



groups have signed UN action plans as a result of these lists, and positive impact has included the release of thousands of children as well as improvement in military recruitment and screening practices.

Despite the importance of the list of perpetrators, it has been politicized in the past. Last year, former Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon created controversy after admitting that he caved to pressure from Saudi Arabia and others and removed the coalition from the list. Watchlist has been calling on the current Secretary-General to ensure the list of perpetrators is credible, complete and accurate, and not based on political pressure.

*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. For more information: <http://watchlist.org/>*

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