



## **Terms of Reference: Research Consultant**

Established in 2001, 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. Working together, we collect and disseminate information on violations against children in conflicts in order to influence key decision-makers to create and implement programs and policies that effectively protect children.

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:**

In at least 15 countries affected by armed conflict, governments imprison children suspected of involvement with non-state armed groups or other national security offenses. Recent investigations have found that children are often detained based on little or no evidence, subjected to torture in order to force confessions, and held in horrific conditions for months or even years.

International law recognizes children involved in armed conflict primarily as victims of serious violations who should be rehabilitated and reintegrated into society. Over the past 20 years, at least 130,000 children have been released or demobilized from armed forces or groups and benefited from rehabilitation assistance. Yet increasingly, governments are treating children affected by armed conflict – even those that may not have any history as combatants – as criminals and security threats.

A practical tool to avoid military detention of children is for governments to sign explicit agreements to swiftly transfer children from military custody to civilian child protection authorities for rehabilitation and reintegration. Since 2013, Sudan, Niger, Chad, and Mali have each signed formal handover protocols for this purpose. Such protocols typically require the transfer of children within a very short period of time, usually 24 to 72 hours. Although implementation can be uneven, such protocols can minimize any military detention of children.

Watchlist is seeking a highly motivated Research Consultant to contribute to its efforts to strengthen the protection of children's rights in armed conflict, with a focus on children detained for their suspected association with armed groups or on national security-related offenses. The Research Consultant will conduct policy research on the role of handover protocols in preventing the military detention of children in armed conflict. Through this research, Watchlist seeks to promote concrete measures – namely, the development and implementation of handover protocols – to protect the rights of children suspected of association with armed groups and to support their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. This work will build upon Watchlist's previous research on the [military detention](#) of children in armed conflict and the impact of efforts to [counter violent extremism](#) on children's rights.

### **Summary of Research Consultant Duties:**

Under the direction of the Director of Watchlist Program, with general support from Watchlist staff, and with inputs from the Watchlist network, the Research Consultant is responsible for researching and developing Watchlist's policy note on handover protocols.

**Expected time frame of consultancy:**

Consultancy to commence on or around July 20, 2020, with final deliverable completed and submitted to the Director of Watchlist Program on or before October 31, 2020. (Approximately 28 days spread out over approximately three months, or until completion of the task.)

**PHASE ONE: PLANNING (3 days)**

Preparation and Desk Research:

- Meet with Director and staff of Watchlist to preliminarily identify key issues and concerns on which to focus the research, as well as stakeholders and key informants to consult, and inform the next phase.
- Conduct a literature review of existing research on military detention of children in armed conflict and the role of handover protocols.
- Develop a timeline for the completion of the project.
- Develop a comprehensive list of interviewees including UN staff, government representatives, NGOs (headquarters and field level), local partners, and others. (Minimum 15 interviewees.)

**PHASE TWO: INFORMATION GATHERING (13 days)**

Stakeholder 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.
- Conduct stakeholder interviews (minimum 15).
- Document information obtained in each interview, and submit to Director of Watchlist Program a brief (5-7 page) summary of key themes and emerging issues that arose from the interviews.

**PHASE THREE: REPORT WRITING (12 days)**

- Prepare a complete policy brief for publication by Watchlist, including background on military detention of children and the role of handover protocols, factors that have led or contributed to the signing of handover protocols, challenges and/or gaps in implementation, the impacts of handover protocols on the protection of children's rights, handover protocols currently under negotiation, and recommendations.
- Circulate the draft report for review by Watchlist staff and Advisory Board members (at least two rounds of review), and integrate and address comments.
- Submit the final text of the report to the Director of Watchlist Program.

**DELIVERABLES:**

1. Front-end planning and bi-monthly process updates to the staff. *To be completed by: August 8, 2020.*
2. Written summary of each stakeholder interview and analysis of key themes/emerging issues. *To be completed by: September 15, 2020.*
3. Final report (based on structure described above, approximately 20 pages in length), including a two-page executive summary of findings and recommendations. *To be completed by October 31, 2020.*

**Requirements:**

- Master's degree in human rights, international affairs, public policy, or related field.
- Knowledge of international juvenile justice, the deprivation of liberty of children, and children's rights.
- Knowledge of international human rights and humanitarian law, with specialization in children and armed conflict preferred.
- Excellent knowledge of UN system and relevant international and regional organizations.
- Excellent written and spoken English; French highly desirable.

- Ability to effectively coordinate and oversee complex projects with multiple logistical, financial, and programmatic components, as well as the ability to be flexible and work well under pressure in a fast-paced environment.
- Experience managing complex projects and deadlines involving different partners.
- Experience conducting qualitative, interview-based research for policy audiences.
- Past experience working with NGOs and/or in the non-profit sector desirable.

**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 and with the prior approval of Watchlist's Director.

**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.

**How to Apply:**

To be considered for this consultancy, please send application materials via email, with the subject line "[Your name] – Research Consultant" to [adriannel@watchlist.org](mailto:adriannel@watchlist.org). All applications must include:

- A curriculum vitae or résumé;
- A thoughtful cover letter detailing relevant skills, experience, fee expectations, and availability; and
- One brief, unedited writing sample (approximately three to five pages).

**The deadline to apply is June 25, 2020. No phone calls please. Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.**