

**Security Council**

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**Letter dated 17 December 2014 from the Chair of the
Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed
Conflict addressed to the President of the Security Council**

I have the honour to submit herewith the report of the Working Group of the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict, containing an account of the activities of the Working Group from 1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014. Henceforth, the Working Group intends to submit its annual report by calendar year.

In this connection, I would appreciate it if the present letter and the enclosed report were brought to the attention of the members of the Security Council and issued as a document of the Council.

(Signed) Sylvie Lucas



Annual report on the activities of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict, established pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005)

(1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014)

I. Introduction

1. On 26 July 2005, the Security Council adopted resolution 1612 (2005), on children and armed conflict.

2. In paragraph 8 of the resolution, the Security Council decided to establish a working group of the Council to review the reports of the mechanism referred to in paragraph 3 of the resolution, to review progress in the development and implementation of the action plans referred to in paragraph 7 of the resolution and to consider other relevant information presented to it. The Council also decided that the working group should:

(a) Make recommendations to the Council on possible measures to promote the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including through recommendations on appropriate mandates for peacekeeping missions and recommendations with respect to the parties to the conflict;

(b) Address requests, as appropriate, to other bodies within the United Nations system for action to support implementation of the resolution in accordance with their respective mandates.

3. Pursuant to resolution 1612 (2005), the Chair of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict has submitted annual reports to the Council on developments in relation to the Working Group.¹ During the reporting period (1 July 2013 to 31 December 2014), the Working Group held 14 formal meetings, on 26 July, 16 August, 25 October and 6 December 2013 and on 14 February, 1 May, 2, 6 and 20 June, 7 and 21 July, 19 September, 26 November and 8 December 2014, under the chairmanship of Sylvie Lucas, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United Nations. During the same period, the Working Group held 32 informal consultations as well as various bilateral meetings.

II. Substantive issues addressed

39th meeting

4. At its 39th formal meeting, on 26 July 2013, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Yemen ([S/2013/383](#)), covering the period from July 2011 to March 2013. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions. She provided details on

¹ The Working Group's annual reports cover the periods 26 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 ([S/2006/497](#)), 1 July 2006 to 30 June 2007 ([S/2007/428](#)), 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2008 ([S/2008/455](#)), 1 July 2008 to 30 June 2009 ([S/2009/378](#)), 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 ([S/2010/410](#)), 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011 ([S/2011/610](#)), 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012 ([S/2012/718](#)) and 1 July 2012 to 30 June 2013 ([S/2013/710](#)).

violations and abuses committed against children in Yemen. She said that while challenges remained, the Government of Yemen had taken important steps to protect children from the impact of conflict. These included the endorsement and adoption by the interministerial committee of the content of the draft action plan to address the recruitment and use of children by the Yemeni Armed Forces, which included provisions aimed at the long-term prevention of child recruitment and use. She emphasized the importance of political commitment translating into the swift adoption and implementation of the action plan; urged sustained support for the action plan on the part of key international actors; and stressed the importance of a holistic approach.

5. During the meeting, the Permanent Representative of Yemen presented the views of his Government on the report of the Secretary-General. The main elements of his statement, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, are reflected in the summary contained in the relevant conclusions ([S/AC.51/2013/3](#)).

6. Also at the 39th formal meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General briefed the Working Group on her mission to the Syrian Arab Republic and the region (Jordan, Iraq, Turkey and Lebanon) carried out from 28 June to 19 July 2013, and the Director of Emergency Programmes of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from January to March 2013.

40th meeting

7. At its 40th formal meeting, on 16 August 2013, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Myanmar ([S/2013/258](#)). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 16 August 2013 ([S/AC.51/2013/2](#)). Following the adoption, the Permanent Representative of Myanmar presented the views of his Government regarding the conclusions.

8. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of Myanmar and the Secretary-General, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 11 September 2013 as a Security Council press release (SC/11116).

41st meeting

9. At its 41st formal meeting, on 25 October 2013, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines ([S/2013/419](#)), covering the period from December 2009 to November 2012.

10. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions. She stated that children in the Philippines had continued to experience grave violations in the armed conflicts in Mindanao and other remote areas. At the same time, she pointed out that significant progress had been made towards the end of 2012 by the Government of the Philippines and some armed groups. She stressed that the Government was moving forward in a model way with respect to child protection at

the international level, including by working on specific legislation aimed at protecting children in conflict and preventing violations. The Government was thus in the final stage of issuing military guidelines to prevent the military use of schools, and was in the process of preparing a comprehensive strategy on children and armed conflict for its armed forces. Nevertheless, oversight of the Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit had to be increased. She also indicated that discussions had been undertaken by her Office in order to expedite the implementation of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front action plan to halt and prevent the recruitment and use of children.

11. During the meeting, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Philippines presented the views of his Government on the report of the Secretary-General. The Working Group then held an exchange of views. The main elements of the statement of the Deputy Permanent Representative, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, are reflected in the summary contained in the relevant conclusions ([S/AC.51/2014/1](#)).

12. Also during the meeting, the Deputy Director of UNICEF presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from April to June 2013.

42nd meeting

13. At its 42nd formal meeting, on 6 December 2013, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Yemen ([S/2013/383](#)). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 9 December 2013 ([S/AC.51/2013/3](#)). Following the adoption, the Permanent Representative of Yemen presented the views of his Government regarding the conclusions.

14. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of Yemen and the Secretary-General, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 20 December 2013 as a Security Council press release (SC/11228).

15. Also at the 42nd formal meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on her mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo carried out from 17 to 23 November 2013, as well as on the implementation of the action plan to end the recruitment and use of children by the Chadian national army. The Chair of the Working Group reported on the Group's field visit to Myanmar carried out from 30 November to 4 December 2013.

43rd meeting

16. At its 43rd formal meeting, on 14 February 2014, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Philippines ([S/2013/419](#)). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 19 February 2014 ([S/AC.51/2014/1](#)). Following the adoption, a representative of the Philippines presented the views of his Government regarding the conclusions.

17. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of the Philippines and to the Secretary-General, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 27 February 2014 as a Security Council press release (SC/11301).

18. Also at its 43rd formal meeting, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2014/31), covering the period from 1 March 2011 to 15 November 2013.

19. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions. She stated that perpetrators of grave violations and abuses against children included the Syrian Armed Forces, Syrian intelligence forces and the National Defence Forces as well as Government-associated militias such as the Shabiha, as well as opposition armed groups, namely, Syrian Kurdish armed groups, including the People's Protection Units (YPG), Free Syrian Army-affiliated groups, Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) and other independent or unidentified groups.

20. During the meeting, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic presented the views of his Government regarding the report of the Secretary-General. The main elements of the statement of the Deputy Permanent Representative, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, are reflected in the summary contained in the relevant conclusions (S/AC.51/2014/4).

21. Also at the meeting, the Deputy Director of the Programme Division of UNICEF presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from July to September 2013.

44th meeting

22. At its 44th formal meeting, on 1 May 2014, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Mali (S/2014/267), covering the period from January 2012 to December 2013.

23. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions. She stated that grave violations against children had been committed by all armed groups in northern Mali and, to a lesser extent, by the Malian armed forces and pro-Government militias, since the outset of the conflict. Noting that the situation had evolved significantly, she commended the Malian authorities for progress achieved at the political and security levels. While welcoming the signing of the *Protocole d'accord* between the Government of Mali and the United Nations on the handover and separation of children and the adoption of the interministerial circular on the protection of children released from armed forces and armed groups, she remained concerned at the lack of accountability for grave violations, as well as at the cases of the detention of minors for charges related to the armed conflict. She added that the monitoring and reporting mechanism on grave violations must be strengthened.

24. During the meeting, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Mali presented the views of his Government on the report of the Secretary-General.

The Working Group then held an exchange of views. The main elements of the statement of the Chargé d'affaires, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, are reflected in the summary contained in the relevant conclusions ([S/AC.51/2014/2](#)).

25. Also at the meeting, the Deputy Director of UNICEF presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from October to December 2013.

45th meeting

26. At its 45th formal meeting, on 2 June 2014, the Working Group was briefed, via videoconference from Juba, on the situation of children and armed conflict in South Sudan by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and by the Co-Chairs of the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting (the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General and United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in UNMISS and the UNICEF Representative in South Sudan). The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict also gave a briefing.

27. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMISS stated that prior to the outbreak of the conflict in December 2013, much progress had been made on child protection issues, with the South Sudan action plan having had significant success. The crisis had, however, reversed many of the gains that had been made. It was estimated that more than half a million children were affected by the ongoing conflict in South Sudan.

28. The Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General stated that since the eruption of the conflict in December 2013, reports had been received through the monitoring and reporting mechanism indicating that both sides of the conflict were responsible for violations and abuses against children, including killing and maiming, recruitment and use and sexual violence.

29. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on the discussions she had held in Addis Ababa from 9 to 11 May 2014 with the Government of South Sudan and the Sudan People's Movement/Army (SPLM/A) in Opposition as well as with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) mediation on ending and preventing violations and abuses against children in South Sudan. Government interlocutors had confirmed the willingness of the Government to recommit to its obligations under the action plan, she said, and SPLM/A in Opposition had agreed to sign a commitment with the United Nations to end violations against children.

30. Working Group members strongly condemned the violations and abuses committed against children by all parties to the armed conflict in South Sudan. They stressed that it was important that the Government fully and immediately implement its action plan and that SPLM/A in Opposition fully and immediately implement its commitments to end and prevent violations and abuses against children. The Chair took note of the invitation extended to the Working Group by the country task force on monitoring and reporting to visit South Sudan and proposed that the Working Group issue a press release on the meeting held, in line with the Group's terms of reference. Subsequently, a press release was issued by the Working Group, on 5 June 2014.

46th meeting

31. At its 46th formal meeting, on 6 June 2014, the Working Group was briefed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security. The joint briefing was focused on cooperation with the African Union concerning the protection of children affected by armed conflict, including on the first open session of the African Union Peace and Security Council on children affected by armed conflict, which had been held on 8 May 2014.

32. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict recalled that in 2013, a partnership agreement between her Office and the African Union Peace and Security Department, in close collaboration with UNICEF, had been signed to formalize their common engagement for the protection of children affected by armed conflict in Africa. She stated that the partnership was aimed at developing a strategy to mainstream child protection into African Union activities and at the institutionalization of policies and procedures on child protection in accordance with regional and international standards.

33. The African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security noted that the Peace and Security Council was a key entry point for mainstreaming child protection into all activities of the African Union. He stressed the importance of identifying good practices with regard to long-term and holistic reintegration programmes for children, and expressed the willingness of the African Union to cooperate with the United Nations in ensuring accountability.

34. Working Group members welcomed the work undertaken by the African Union on children and armed conflict and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage in dialogue. The holding of the first open session of the Peace and Security Council on children affected by armed conflict and its proposal to appoint an African Union Special Envoy for Children in Africa were also welcomed.

35. Also at the 46th formal meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on her mission to Yemen carried out from 13 to 15 May 2014.

47th meeting

36. At its 47th formal meeting, on 20 June 2014, the Working Group was briefed by the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court on the work of the Court regarding children and armed conflict.

37. The Prosecutor said that the fate of children and armed conflict had become a cornerstone of the International Criminal Court's early jurisprudence. In this regard, she pointed out that in the first case against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, there had been a focus on charging him with the recruitment of children as soldiers. Her Office had also worked on other cases to expand the focus from the specific issue of child soldiers and to consider all the different ways children are affected in war situations. She further informed the Working Group that her Office had started drafting a new policy paper on children.

38. Working Group members expressed appreciation for the work undertaken by the International Criminal Court in relation to children and armed conflict.

48th meeting

39. At its 48th formal meeting, on 7 July 2014, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Mali (S/2014/267). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 7 July 2014 (S/AC.51/2014/2). Following the adoption, the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of Mali presented the views of his Government on the conclusions.

40. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council enclosing recommendations addressed to the Council, by requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of Mali and to the Secretary-General, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 8 August 2014 as a Security Council press release (SC/11518).

41. Also at the meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on her mission to South Sudan carried out from 22 to 27 June 2014.

42. The Deputy Director of the Programme Division of UNICEF presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from January to March 2014.

49th meeting

43. At its 49th formal meeting, on 21 July 2014, the Working Group discussed the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/453), covering the period from January 2010 to December 2013.

44. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict introduced the report and recalled its main conclusions. She stated that grave violations against children had been committed by all parties to the conflict. The Special Representative welcomed the efforts of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to protect children, in particular the signature on 4 October 2012 of the action plan to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children, sexual violence and other grave violations against children by the national armed and security forces, the Government's engagement in the campaign "Children, not soldiers", and the appointment on 14 July 2014 of a Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment. The Special Representative stressed that the fight against impunity was crucial to put an end to grave violations against children and that further progress needed to be accomplished in that regard.

45. During the meeting, the Permanent Representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented the views of his Government on the report of the Secretary-General. The Working Group then held an exchange of views. The main elements of the statement of the Permanent Representative, as well as the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group, are reflected in the summary contained in the relevant conclusions (S/AC.51/2014/3).

46. Also at the 49th formal meeting, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict briefed the Working Group on the situation of children and armed conflict in Iraq.

50th meeting

47. At its 50th formal meeting, on 19 September 2014, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on the situation of children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (S/2014/453). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 18 September 2014 (S/AC.51/2014/3). Following the adoption, a representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo presented the views of his Government on the conclusions.

48. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council enclosing recommendations addressed to the Council and requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, to the Secretary-General and to the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 7 November 2014 as a Security Council press release (SC/11635).

51st meeting

49. At its 51st formal meeting, on 26 November 2014, the Working Group adopted conclusions with respect to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic (S/2014/31). Those conclusions were issued as a Security Council document dated 26 November 2014 (S/AC.51/2014/4). Following the adoption, the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic presented the views of his Government on the conclusions.

50. The Chair of the Working Group subsequently carried out the tasks entrusted to her in the context of the conclusions, including by conveying a letter to the President of the Security Council requesting that the President transmit letters to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, and by transmitting letters to the World Bank and donors. A public statement by the Working Group was published on 18 December 2014 as a Security Council press release (SC/11716).

52nd meeting

51. At the 52nd formal meeting, on 8 December 2014, the Chair of the Working Group reported on the Group's field visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo carried out from 30 November to 4 December 2014.

52. During the meeting, the Deputy Director of Emergency Programmes of UNICEF presented the Secretary-General's global horizontal note covering the period from April to June 2014.

53. The Chair made closing remarks, reviewing the activities of the Working Group over the past two years.

III. Other matters

54. Upon the invitation of the Government of Myanmar, the Working Group paid a four-day visit to Myanmar, from 30 November to 4 December 2013. The delegation

was composed of the following eight members of the Security Council: Azerbaijan, Australia, France, Guatemala, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the United States of America and Luxembourg, as Chair of the Working Group.

55. The purpose of the visit was to: review progress in the implementation of the action plan signed on 27 June 2012 by the Government and the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting and witnessed by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict; assess remaining challenges and issues with respect to monitoring and reporting under Security Council resolution 1612 (2005) and subsequent resolutions; and interact with the concerned Ministries and other government officials, child protection actors, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and children and obtain first-hand knowledge about the situation of children affected by armed conflict in Myanmar, with special attention accorded to the compliance efforts of Tatmadaw and remaining challenges, including with regard to non-State actors listed in the Secretary-General's annual report, and assess challenges and opportunities with respect to the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups in Myanmar.

56. From 30 November to 4 December 2014, the Working Group paid a four-day visit to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The delegation was composed of the following members of the Security Council: Australia, France, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, Rwanda, the United Kingdom, the United States and Luxembourg, as Chair of the Working Group.

57. The purpose of the visit was to: review progress in the implementation of the action plan signed on 4 October 2012 by the Government and the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting; discuss the conclusions on children and armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo that were adopted on 19 September 2014; and interact with the relevant Ministries and other government officials, child protection actors, NGOs, and children formerly associated with armed groups and obtain first-hand knowledge of the situation of children affected by armed conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with special attention to the compliance efforts of the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo (FARDC) and remaining challenges, including with regard to non-State actors listed in the Secretary-General's annual report, and assess challenges and opportunities for the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

58. The Secretariat continued to make available to the Working Group a United Nations "e-room", which allows members to access the institutional memory of the Group with a user ID and password as well as a webpage. During the reporting period, the Internet webpage of the Working Group also continued to be available.