



United Nations Human Rights Council

25th Session

Agenda item 3

Clustered Interactive Dialogue with the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict and SRSG on Violence against Children

12 March 2014

Children Affected by Armed Conflict

Joint NGO Oral Statement

Mr. President,

This statement is made by the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) on behalf of 7 NGOs.¹

We welcome the reports of the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict and the SRSG on Violence against Children.

1. Mainstreaming child protection in conflict

1 billion children live in countries or territories affected by armed conflict.² These children are extremely vulnerable, as they are at risk of and suffer from various forms of violence, exploitation and abuse. Yet, child protection mechanisms and programming are often overlooked as life-saving interventions.

To effectively protect children and stop violence against children in armed conflict, we call on UN Member States and partners to:

- (i) Join international efforts to prevent the use and recruitment of children in hostilities through ratifying the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts;
- (ii) Take measures to prevent and respond to violence against children and hold all perpetrators to account for violations of children's rights;
- (iii) Provide coordinated assistance to children who are unaccompanied or separated as a result of armed conflict, prioritizing support to the child either within their own

¹ Co-signatories include: Defence for Children International, Geneva Call, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Federation, War Child, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and World Vision International.

² UNICEF (2007) Machel Study 10-year strategic review, p.19

- family or in an alternative family settings in accordance with the International Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children;
- (iv) Commit to ensuring in all new or recurring conflicts that child protection and education are considered a vital aspect of a humanitarian response and that funding is commensurate to the level of need in these two under-resourced areas.

2. Making schools safe and learning accessible for children in conflict

Attacks on and military use of schools can have a devastating impact on children. Attacks can convert a school into a military target under international law and make students, teachers and learning facilities vulnerable to attacks and other forms of violence by parties to hostilities.

We would like to thank the SRSG on Children and Armed Conflict for continued support in developing and promoting the Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict.³

We would like to echo her call to UN Member States to:

- (i) Take all measures to protect students, teachers, schools and universities from attack and military use;
- (ii) Endorse the Draft Lucens Guidelines and implement them in domestic legislation and military doctrine.

3. Child protection in the post-2015 development agenda:

Finally, to address violence and prevent future armed conflicts we encourage UN Member States to call for the inclusion of a child protection goal in the post-2015 development agenda, with specific targets and indicators addressing both child protection in conflict and non-conflict settings.

Thank you.

³ GCPEA, “Draft Lucens Guidelines for Protecting Schools and Universities from Military Use during Armed Conflict”, November 2012:

http://protectingeducation.org/sites/default/files/documents/draft_lucens_guidelines.pdf