



# International Service for Human Rights

## The Reports in Short

ISHR's summaries of documents for the UN Commission on Human Rights  
62nd Session and Human Rights Council 2<sup>nd</sup> Session

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for children and armed conflict<sup>1</sup>

Mandate holder

Radhika Coomaraswamy

Mandate

The mandate was established in 1996<sup>2</sup>. The role of the Special Representative is to: act as an advocate by building awareness of the needs of war-affected children; act as a catalyst proposing ideas and approaches to enhance the protection of children in war; act as a convenor to bring together key actors within and outside the UN to promote more concerted and effective responses; and be a facilitator undertaking humanitarian and diplomatic initiatives to unblock difficult political situations. These tasks are undertaken through advocacy; by assessing progress achieved and difficulties encountered in strengthening the protection of children in situations of armed conflict; promoting the collection of information about the plight of children affected by conflict; collaborating with civil society organisations; and undertaking capacity-building programs.

Activities

- The Special Representative convened the Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict in September 2005 to discuss the implementation of Security Council *Resolution 1612(2005)* and established a Steering Committee to undertake regular review of the implementation and functioning of the mechanism.

Annual report<sup>3</sup>

### Scope

The report is devoted to a discussion of key issues and proposals for more systematic mainstreaming of the matter of children affected by armed conflict into the work of the UN human rights system.

### Summary and key conclusions

In 2005, the Secretary-General, in his report to the Security Council and the General Assembly on children and armed conflict<sup>4</sup>, launched the **era of application campaign for the enforcement of existing international child protection norms and standards on the ground**. This report sets out a **monitoring and reporting regime** on grave violations against children in situations of conflict, endorsed by the Security Council in *Resolution 1612(2005)*<sup>5</sup>. The UN human rights system plays an essential role in the protection of the rights of war-affected children on the ground, especially in view of the reform efforts currently underway in the UN human rights system, which are oriented towards increasing implementation of international human rights norms and standards at the national level.

<sup>1</sup> Summaries prepared by Cléa Thouin, Intern, ISHR, supervised and edited by Meghna Abraham, Information Program, ISHR.

<sup>2</sup> General Assembly *Resolution 51/77*.

<sup>3</sup> E/CN.4/2006/66, 23 February 2006.

<sup>4</sup> S/2005/72 and A/59/695.

<sup>5</sup> S/RES/1612(2005), <http://www.un.org/special-rep/children-armed-conflict/Download/S-RES-1612e.pdf>.

### **Monitoring and reporting:**

The Secretary-General's monitoring and reporting mechanism will focus on **six grave child rights violations in situation of conflict**: the killing or maiming of children; recruiting or using child soldiers; attacks against schools or hospitals; rape and other grave sexual violence against children; abduction of children; and denial of humanitarian access to and for children. Its purpose is to attain timely, accurate, objective and reliable information on such grave violations as a basis for concrete action against violators by key decision-making bodies that constitute "destinations for action", including the Commission on Human Rights, the CRC, and national governments. Security Council *Resolution 1612(2005)* also creates a dedicated Security Council working group on children and armed conflict, and requests parties to armed conflict to prepare and implement time-bound action plans to halt the violations cited in the Secretary-General's Report.

### **The UN human rights system:**

- The High Commissioner for Human Rights' Plan of Action highlights the challenges of armed conflict, violence and impunity and **OHCHR**, working closely with the Office of the Special Representative, UNICEF, and other UN system partners, plays a central role in the ongoing development, strengthening and implementation on the ground of the international norms and standards for the protection of the rights of war-affected children. The Office of the Special Representative has worked closely with OHCHR in creating awareness of this issue and mainstreaming it in the UN system;
- The **Commission on Human Rights** receives monitoring information on country situations through the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict and *ad hoc* reports. A number of its special rapporteurs have incorporated the issue of war-affected children affected in their reports;
- The Special Representative continues to provide information on the status of the protection of the rights of war-affected children in specific country situations ahead of country reviews by the **CRC**. The reports of States party to the *Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict* are also important in this respect.

### **Key recommendations**

- Key UN entities should renew their commitment to ensure that the era of application of international norms and standards for the protection of the rights of war-affected children becomes a reality;
- **OHCHR should continue to prioritise the protection of the rights of war-affected children** in the terms of reference, work plans and programs in stand-alone missions and integrated human rights components of peace operations;
- **OHCHR should further ensure adequate child protection expertise** in the context of its commission of inquiry or fact-finding missions;
- The **Commission on Human Rights should continue to incorporate specific children and armed conflict concerns into its discussions**, technical cooperation programs and resolutions when considering country-specific and thematic human rights concerns.