



## **WATCHLIST BIDS FAREWELL TO UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT**

### **CALLS FOR REDOUBLED UN EFFORTS TO PROTECT CHILDREN IN WARS**

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**New York August 1, 2005** – The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict bids farewell to Olara Otunnu, UN Special Representative of the Secretary General for Children and Armed Conflict, and thanks him for years of service to the cause of protecting children affected by war. During Mr. Otunnu’s tenure, the international community has made tremendous strides in raising awareness about the plight of children affected by armed conflict and creating international legal instruments to hold perpetrators of crimes against children accountable for their heinous actions.

“The UN must now focus on implementing the ground- breaking laws for protecting children’s security and rights, and reinvigorate all efforts to protect children caught up in armed conflicts around the globe,” said Julia Freedson, Director of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, an international network of non- governmental organizations working for the protection of children’s security and rights in situations of armed conflict. “The UN needs to seize this moment as an opportunity to ensure that promises it has made to protect children devastated by wars become a reality,” Freedson said.

To this end, Watchlist calls for the swift and effective implementation of the UN Security Council’s six resolutions focused on children and armed conflict. “The Council took bold new strides in adopting a long- awaited resolution earlier this week that will give the UN real power to hold perpetrators of crimes against children accountable for their atrocities. There’s no more time to waste for the children whose lives continue to be victims of murder, rape and recruitment,”

said Kathleen Hunt, CARE International's Representative to the United Nations, and Chair of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict.

Watchlist calls for the following measures to be taken:

- The Secretary- General should immediately appoint a new Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict with the highest qualifications as an experienced child protection worker and advocate, who will quickly pick up the momentum achieved and move the focus of action where it's now needed – to the field.
- The mandate of the Office of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict must be retained to ensure that special focus remains on overseeing and monitoring the implementation of Security Council resolutions and other UN responsibilities.
- All UN agencies with mandates related to child protection must work in collaboration with the new Special Representative to ensure that the interests of children suffering in conflict situations take priority over the political interests of governments and other parties to conflict.
- Donor countries must be forthcoming with the support needed to ensure adequate funding for programs needed for the protection of children affected by armed conflict.
- The UN Security Council must immediately establish the Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict mandated by Resolution 1612, to work in close cooperation with the new Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict on holding parties to conflict accountable for crimes against children.

ENDS

The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict is a global network of non-governmental organizations dedicated to monitoring and reporting on violations against children in armed conflict. The Watchlist is managed by a Steering Committee of 6 international NGOs that are leaders in child protection.