



Security Council

Distr.: General
5 December 2008

Original: English

Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

Conclusions on children and armed conflict in Uganda

1. At its 16th meeting, on 25 July 2008, the Working Group examined the additional report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Uganda, which focused on the activities of the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) (S/2008/409), introduced by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. The Representative of Uganda participated in the subsequent discussion.
2. The main elements of the exchange of views among the members of the Working Group are summarized below.
3. The members of the Working Group welcomed the submission of the report of the Secretary-General in accordance with Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). Some members expressed full support for the Secretary-General's analysis and recommendations while others expressed their disagreement with certain recommendations.
4. The members of the Working Group stressed the importance of following up on the specific recommendations to LRA, which have yet to be implemented according to the message delivered by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for LRA-affected areas, in light of the fact that the next report on the situation of children and armed conflict in Uganda will be issued in 2009.
5. Deep concern was expressed about the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers and all other violations and abuses committed against children by LRA.
6. Concern was also expressed about the realization of the commitments of the LRA leaders to cooperate with the Working Group, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the Special Envoy, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other stakeholders to put an end to the violations and abuses.
7. The members of the Working Group urged LRA to immediately release any children that it had recruited.
8. The Permanent Representative of Uganda:
 - (a) Welcomed the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General;



(b) Took note of the recommendations of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and reiterated the willingness of her Government to cooperate with the Working Group;

(c) Stated that her Government and the United Nations country task force on monitoring and reporting were in the final phases of negotiating an action plan with regard to the Uganda People's Defence Force (UPDF) and the Local Defence Units (LDU);

(d) Reiterated her Government's request to de-list UPDF and LDU from the annexes of the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

9. The members of the Working Group stressed the need for Uganda to finalize, sign and implement an action plan, in line with Security Council resolutions 1612 (2005) and 1539 (2004), as this is the necessary step that would allow groups to be de-listed from the annexes of the reports of the Secretary-General.

10. Further to the meeting and subject to and consistent with applicable international law and relevant Security Council resolutions, including Security Council resolution 1612 (2005), the Working Group agreed to the following.

Recommendations to the Security Council

11. The Working Group agreed to recommend that the President of the Security Council address a message to the head of the LRA delegation to the Juba peace talks through a public statement by the Chair of the Working Group transmitted by the Special Envoy for LRA-affected areas, in close coordination with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General:

(a) *Recalling* its previous message transmitted by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the LRA-affected areas on 24 August 2007;

(b) *Recalling* the obligations of LRA under the Agreement on Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration signed in February 2008, and noting specifically that the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and armed groups is a violation of international law;

(c) *Recalling* in particular the engagement of LRA to ensure the earliest release and repatriation to Uganda of pregnant and lactating women along with all children under 18 years of age;

(d) *Deploring* the refusal by the leader of LRA to sign the final peace agreement on 10 April 2008 and urging him to do so;

(e) *Calling* the attention of the leader of LRA to the fact that in July 2008, the Security Council received an additional report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Uganda (S/2008/409), and stressing the absence of any sign of the implementation of the recommendations contained therein;

(f) *Strongly condemning* the continued recruitment and use of child soldiers and all other violations and abuses committed by LRA, in particular in south Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic;

(g) *Strongly condemning* also the recent abduction by LRA of 159 children in villages in Oriental province of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and strongly urging it to release them immediately and unconditionally;

(h) *Strongly urging* it:

(i) To immediately release all children remaining or newly born within the ranks of LRA, bearing in mind in this process the need for the released infants and younger children not to be separated from their mothers, and to provide a list of their names and ages for complete verification, as agreed upon in February 2008 in the agreement on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration;

(ii) To cooperate with the relevant United Nations bodies;

(iii) To respond positively to this message within one month of receipt.

Direct action by the Working Group

12. The Working Group agreed to address letters from the Chairman:

To the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Resident Coordinators in Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan

(a) *Requesting* the United Nations Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Uganda, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Sudan, in close cooperation with the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) and the United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), to develop a strategy for increased regional joint monitoring capability to monitor and report on cross border recruitment and use of children by LRA;

To donors

(b) *Encouraging* them to provide funding to support the relevant programmes of Governments and humanitarian actors for the release, return and reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups into their respective families and communities, with due consideration to the long-term requirements of such programmes;

(c) *Drawing* their attention to the importance of educational and socio-economic reintegration, including poverty alleviation activities, in order to prevent the recruitment and use of children, in violation of applicable international law, by armed forces and groups by providing those children with a viable alternative.