



United Nations Office of the Special Representative  
of the Secretary-General for

## CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

### **Input for the 18 UPR Working Group Session on Afghanistan**

[Background: In 2012, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting in Afghanistan reported 66 cases of recruitment and use of boys, some as young as eight years. Of these, 47 children were reportedly recruited and used by armed groups. Most children were used to manufacture and plant improvised explosive devices, as well as to transport provisions. At least ten children were recruited by armed groups to conduct suicide attacks. Notwithstanding the official age requirements for enlistment, the Afghan National Police (ANP) and the Afghan Local Police (ALP) were reportedly responsible for 19 cases of underage recruitment in 2012. Concern also remained over the informal use of children for security-related tasks by the Afghan National Security Forces, which include the ANP, the ALP as well as the Afghan National Army (ANA).

Concern exists over ongoing reports of ill-treatment of children in detention facilities, the public display of child detainees in national media, and the lack of documentation and follow-up on the release of these children. In 2012, a total of 189 cases of boys detained in juvenile rehabilitation centres by Afghan authorities were documented. A further unknown number of children were held in detention facilities of the ANP and the National Directorate of Security. Children continue to be abducted for the purposes of recruitment and sexual abuse. In 2012, the Country Task Force documented 1,304 conflict-related child casualties, the vast majority of which resulted from attacks with improvised explosive devices and suicide attacks, including by child suicide bombers. Children were also victim of explosive weapons in populated areas, including mortar attacks, shelling and shooting between pro-Government forces and various armed groups, explosive remnants of war; and airstrikes by the International Military forces.

Steps taken by the Afghan Government towards implementation of the Action Plan on underage recruitment by the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) signed by the Government and the United Nations in January 2011. In particular, the Ministry of Interior reported the establishment of a monthly monitoring and reporting system, public campaigns on birth registration, and training of ANSF personnel on age assessment procedures. The Ministry of Interior also provided information on training on child rights and prevention of underage recruitment conducted in seven ANP police zones, as well as awareness-raising on gender based violence and underage recruitment in 77 schools and 24 mosques. In parallel, the Ministry of Interior pursued efforts to prevent the falsification of national identity cards through the development of a biometric identity card system. Child centres established within ANP recruitment centres in Ghor, Badghis, Herat and Farah provinces documented attempts of enlistment of children into ANP and ANA. As a result, 122 underage recruits were rejected in 2012. Despite these encouraging measures, sustained engagement from both the United Nations and the Government is needed to build on the momentum created with the signature of the Action Plan.]

- Expresses concerns about the continued presence of children in the ranks of the Afghan National Police and the Afghan Local police, and in this regard

calls upon the Afghan Government to take all necessary measures to ensure the immediate identification and release of these children.

- Welcomes the continued engagement of the Afghan government on the implementation of the Action Plan to end the recruitment and use of children in the Afghan national security Forces, and in this regard urges the Government to implement all remaining provisions as a matter of urgency, in coordination with the United Nations.
- Notes with concern that children remain detained for alleged association with armed groups and calls upon the Afghan authorities to treat these children as victims, and and if prosecuted, to ensure that they are treated in line with international juvenile justice standards.
- Calls upon the Afghan authorities to take all precautionary measures to protect children in the course of military operations.