

WE ARE CHILDREN NOT SOLDIERS

Sudan

The **Government of Sudan** signed an **Action Plan** with the United Nations to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by **Sudan Security Forces** on **27 March 2016**.

Three Areas

In 2015, political dialogue continued but did not bring an end to conflict in South Kordofan and Blue Nile States. There are also ongoing tensions as the status of Abyei remains unsettled. Children were victims of attacks by Government forces and armed groups. Intercommunal violence remained another feature of conflict in the Three Areas and the year 2015 saw an increase in cross border (Sudan/South Sudan) activities by armed groups. In 2015, the UN also received reports of cross-border recruitment of South Sudanese refugee children by the SPLA-in Opposition.

Darfur

The children of Darfur continue to be victims of grave violations occurring during fighting between Government forces and armed groups, or in tribal clashes, particularly in Jebel Marra.

In 2015, dialogue with armed groups resulted in command orders and a joint communique issued by the Justice and Equality Movement, the Sudan Liberation Army/ Minni Minawi and Sudan liberation Army/ Abdul Wahid in which they committed to stop and prevent grave violations against children.

Progress in the implementation of the Action Plan

The Action Plan sets out a series of tangible actions to prevent the recruitment and use of children and to ensure children associated with the national security forces are released and have access to reintegration services.

The Governmental high-level and technical coordination committees in charge of overseeing the Action Plan implementation have begun their activities, with the support of the United Nations. These new fora will also allow the United Nations to bring incidents of violations to the attention of the Government security forces for immediate action.

The Action Plan engages the Government to facilitate access to conflict-affected areas in Darfur, Blue Nile and South Kordofan States to monitor the implementation of the Action Plan and to address grave violations committed against children by all parties to conflict. This will be a key factor for the success of the Action Plan.

A funding plan has been drafted and is envisioning a 10-person team in charge of the day-to-day implementation of the Action Plan. Resources needed include funds for reintegration, child protection training, the establishment of a Child Protection Unit within the Government Security forces, materials to raise awareness as well as monitoring and evaluation activities. Adequate funding will be crucial for the successful implementation of the Action Plan.



WE ARE CHILDREN NOT SOLDIERS

The way forward to protect the children of Sudan:

Sudan already has laws that set the minimum age for recruitment at 18 and criminalize underage recruitment. The country does not recruit children as a matter of policy, but there are gaps that have allowed minors to join the national security forces. Cases of underage recruitment by Sudan Government Security Forces continue to be documented by the UN.

Identification, release and reintegration of children

In accordance with the Action Plan, all children should be identified, released, provided with reintegration services and the Government should prevent new recruitments.

Accountability

Ensuring accountability for those who commit grave violations against children, including child recruitment, will play an important role to end and prevent the violations.

Child protection training

Develop and disseminate child protection training integrated into the curriculum of Sudan security forces, including age assessment procedures. Taking into account the low rate of birth registrations in conflict areas, age verification mechanisms play an essential role and need to be strengthened to identify and release all underage soldiers and prevent future recruitments.

Community awareness campaign

Develop a campaign to prevent the recruitment and use of children.

Detention of children

During her visit in March, the Special Representative met with 21 children allegedly recruited by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and held in detention by Sudanese intelligence services since April and August 2015. She advocated for the children's release and handover to child protection actors to allow the United Nations to begin the process of family tracing, reunification and to support the boy's return to civilian life.

Parties to conflict listed in the Annual Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict (all for recruitment and use of children)

- Government security forces, including the Sudanese Armed Forces, the Popular Defense Forces and the Sudan Police Forces
- Justice and Equality Movement
- Pro-Government militias
- Sudan liberation Army/ Abdul Wahid
- Sudan Liberation Army/ Minni Minawi
- Sudan People's Liberation Movement North



May 2016



Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

unicef 