



Gilles Désesquelles

Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Chad

Brussels, 25 March 2011
Our Ref: B1054

Your Excellency,

Compromised Future - Children recruited by armed forces and groups in eastern Chad

We would like to draw to your urgent attention to our recent report on the recruitment of children by armed forces and groups in eastern Chad, published on the occasion of the International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers on 12 February 2011. The report confirms that all parties involved in the conflict in eastern Chad recruit and use children, including the Chadian army (*Armée Nationale Tchadienne*), Chadian and Sudanese armed opposition groups, as well as community leaders from different ethnic groups.

We are deeply concerned about the ongoing recruitment and use of children by all parties to the conflict, and the consequences thereof for the future of those children. We are also concerned about the impunity enjoyed by those suspected of recruiting children into their ranks. The child soldiers' situation is further aggravated by the lack of effective demobilisation and reintegration programmes in Chad, owing to the lack of political engagement by the Chadian Government and the military, lack of sufficient resources and continuing unrest in eastern Chad.

In line with the European Union's commitment under its Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC), the EU Delegation and member state missions must adopt an effective and comprehensive policy to address the short, medium and long-term impact of armed conflict on children, making use of the variety of tools at its disposal.

We urge the EU to raise concerns about the recruitment and use of children in the armed conflict with the Chadian authorities, including during the political dialogue under the Cotonou Agreement. In particular, we urge the EU to call on Chad to:

- End the recruitment and use of children by the army.
- Ensure effective demobilization and reintegration of children.
- End impunity for recruitment and use of child soldiers and other grave violations of children's rights.

For further details on these recommendations, please see page 42 of our report.

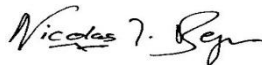
We believe the EU's engagement can have a constructive and decisive influence over events in the country, in particular as concerns the situation of child soldiers. For this reason, we urge the EU to:

- Through financial and other assistance, support the efforts of the Chadian Government to set up and implement an effective and comprehensive strategy which builds on and strengthens the National Programme for the Release, Transitional Support and Reintegration of Children Associated with Armed Forces and Groups and, in particular, implements the N'Djamena Declaration.
- Provide financial and other support for reintegration activities, including education, vocational training, income-generating activities, for children formerly associated with armed forces or groups.
- Provide financial and other support for maintaining field operations by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in eastern Chad following the withdrawal of MINURCAT.

We understand that Chad has been identified as a priority country for implementation of the EU CAAC Guidelines. We would therefore much appreciate receiving information about any political steps taken and specific programmes set up by the EU in implementing the CAAC Guidelines in Chad.

We look forward to hearing from you, and remain at your disposal for any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Nicolas J. Beger
Director

Cc:

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