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COALITION TO STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

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Steering Committee Members: Amnesty International, Defence for Children International, Human Rights Watch, Jesuit Refugee Service, Quaker United Nations Office - Geneva, Rädda Barnen for the International Save the Children Alliance, International Federation Terre des Hommes and World Vision International and several regional NGOs from Latin America, Africa and Asia.

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Queen Rania of Jordan to launch landmark conference on the use of children as soldiers in the Middle East and North Africa

Her Majesty Queen Rania Al-Abdullah will launch the first ever, regional conference analysing the use of children as soldiers in the Middle East and North Africa.

From Sunday 8 April, over 110 senior government and military officials, UN child-rights' experts and NGOs from across the region will discuss the global problem of child soldiers, including in the Middle East and North Africa.

Contributors to this event include Mary Robinson, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Olara Ottunnu, UN Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict.

On the eve of the conference the Coalition will release highlights of a major country-by-country report on the use of child soldiers in national armies and armed groups of North Africa and the Middle East, from Algeria to Sudan, comprehensively documenting this problem in the region for the first time.

This conference, jointly organised by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, the Jordan Institute for Diplomacy and UNICEF, will aim to create a region-wide network to campaign for a worldwide ban on the recruitment of under-18's as soldiers — not just by armed groups but governments as well.

This Conference is the fifth organised by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Like the previous four regional conferences (Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America) the Amman Conference on the Use of Children as Soldiers is expected to culminate in a strong declaration against the use of child soldiers signed by all governments present.

Note to editors:

The Conference will take place in the Inter Continental Hotel, Amman (+ 962 6 464 1361).

The full media kit is available on-line by visiting our website: www.child-soldiers.org.

Our media officers are happy to arrange interviews, accreditation to the Conference, facilitate opinion pieces and provide copies of the report.