

Beyond "Blood Diamond"

Child Soldiers, Kimberley Process and the Special Court for Sierra Leone

**Panel discussion at the UN Correspondents Association
10 January 2007**

Panellists

- Jimmie Briggs, author, *Innocents Lost*, expert on child soldiers
- Tonderai Chikuhwa, Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict
- Cecilia L. Gardner, Esq., President & CEO, Jewellers Vigilance Committee
- Elise Keppler, Human Rights Watch expert on the Special Court
- Ian Smillie, Partnership Africa Canada expert on the Kimberley Process
- Giorgia Tortora, New York Liaison Officer, Special Court for Sierra Leone

Edited Transcript

Giorgia Titora (New York Liaison Officer, Special Court for Sierra Leone)

As you know, the Court was established in response to the crimes that were committed during the ten-year conflict, and was created by an agreement between the Government of Sierra Leone and the United Nations as an international tribunal with mixed Sierra Leonean and international composition. So the Special Court has a staff of international and Sierra Leoneans. Also the judges of the Special Court were both appointed by the United Nations and the Government of Sierra Leone, and the Court applies a mix of international law and Sierra Leonean law.

The Special Court became operational in July 2002, so it is now in the fifth year of its operations. In this period I think it's fair to say that the Court has made quite some progress. The Court, first of all, has started construction of its physical premises. We now have office space, state of the art courthouse and detention facilities, which are all going to be left to the Government of Sierra Leone once the Special Court concludes its mandate. The Court also investigated crimes committed in Sierra Leone, issued indictments, started and - in some cases concluded - trials. We have issued 13 indictments, ten people have been brought into the custody of the Special Court. There have been three trials up to now, and two of these trials have already been concluded. We are waiting for judgements to be issued early this year. The third trial, the one of the Revolutionary United Front, is still ongoing, and we expect that to be concluded by the end of 2007.

As you may know, last year also the former president of Liberia, Charles Taylor, was handed over to the Special Court. He is now in The Hague awaiting trial and we have a tentative date for the beginning of the trial of 2 April this year. The Special Court is also different from the other tribunals in that it is actually working in the country where the crimes under its jurisdiction actually took place. That has allowed the Court to interact with Sierra Leoneans in a new way. The Special Court has developed a thorough outreach program and in this way has tried to make the whole process relevant to Sierra Leoneans themselves. This has all been done with a fairly lean budget and also with a constant uncertainty about funding. The Special Court is the only international tribunal that is funded entirely out of voluntary contributions from member states.

Very briefly I would like to mention what is the relevance of the Special Court for the issue of child soldiers. As you know, child soldiers can be considered both perpetrators and victims in a conflict like the one in Sierra Leone. The Special Court has, as perpetrators, has the possibility of investigating and prosecuting them. There is a provision that allows the Court to have jurisdiction over persons who were 15 years or older at the time of the alleged commission of the crimes. The statute of the Special Court also provides specific safeguards in case someone between the ages of 15 and 18 should be brought before the Court, and asked the Court to take into account

rehabilitation as the main goal and prohibits the Court from imposing prison in case there was a sentence, so that the Court will have to look at different measures such as the reconciliation or rehabilitation of another kind. The Court, however, has not indicted any child soldiers and the prosecutor has looked at the evidence and, keeping in mind the main focus of the Court, which is to prosecute those who bear the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone, has made the assessment and taken the decision that no child soldier would fit this category.

With regard to child soldiers as victims, the Special Court has been really, I think, groundbreaking and this is because the Court statute first of all recognizes the conscription and enlisting of children under 15 as a crime under international law. But mainly because the Special Court has been the first international tribunal to ever indict someone for the crime of child recruitment. And the prosecutor of the Special Court has included this crime in all the indictments that have been issued so far by the Court. The other important thing is also our appeals chamber issued an important decision that allowed the actual prosecution of this crime, recognizing child recruitment as a crime under international law that entailed individual criminal responsibility that may be at the time relevant for the mandate of the Court that has started in November 1996.

Having said that, I would just want to conclude by saying that the Special Court has also been facing a number of challenges. And also, this year is going to be particularly important. First of all, the first judgements are going to be issued. The Special Court is likely to start the first appeal trials. We are going to start the trial of Charles Taylor. And at the same time, the Court is trying wind down its operations while facing constant uncertainty of the financing. I would leave now the floor to Elise to talk more about some of these issues.

Elise Keppler (Human Rights Watch)

Well first, let me start by saying thank you for the opportunity to participate in this timely event, to organizers. While the Special Court for Sierra Leone is not referenced directly in the film *Blood Diamond*, its graphic depiction of the abuses committed during the Sierra Leone conflict very much underscores why there was such an incredibly strong need for justice for the crimes committed in Sierra Leone. The brutality of the crimes committed was quite marked, including widespread mutilations, abductions, murder, rape, other sexual violence, child recruitment. Human Rights Watch had a researcher based in Freetown during the conflict and documented these abuses as a way to try and ensure better protection of civilians. We then pressed for the creation of an international tribunal like the Special Court for Sierra Leone.

We very much take the view that justice is absolutely essential for these kinds of crimes, the most serious crimes. That's to bring redress to victims of the crimes, but also to contribute to building respect for the rule of law, particularly in countries emerging from conflict, in places like Sierra Leone where there's been a rule of law vacuum. And in the case of Sierra Leone, the national courts, which are generally the preferred venue to have trials, were in no position to deal with these kinds of cases, and that's why it was absolutely necessary to have an internationally-supported process and the kind of tribunal that has been set up in Sierra Leone.

We've done two missions to evaluate the work of the Special Court and it's been our estimation that the Special Court to date is making a vital contribution to bringing to justice the crimes committed in Sierra Leone. As Giorgia mentioned there are ten people are trial, and these individuals are accused of bearing the greatest responsibility for the crimes committed, and are from all three factions involved, or all the factions in the conflict and that's very important for demonstrating the impartiality of the process.

There are also, as Giorgia mentioned, charges including child recruitment and child related to sexual violence. The Special Court has also issued decisions, precedent-setting decisions on international law. The Court's outreach program in our estimation is really a model for other tribunals. It has a robust programme whereby it reaches out to all areas of the country through a variety of initiatives including town hall meetings, video summaries, radio summaries are preceding. And these efforts, combined with the Court's location in Freetown, and its mixed

staffing nature, really do a lot to make the Court accessible to the local population. From our perspective this is critical so that the Court's work to bring justice has resonance with the communities most affected by the crimes. And that makes the justice process all the more meaningful.

The Court certainly has shortcomings, and Human Rights Watch has made recommendations for improvements to different areas. These include such issues as our feeling that the Office of the Prosecutor interpreted what is admittedly a narrow mandate overly narrowly. And also issues related to having interaction with the national courts and the need to enhance cross-fertilization with the national judiciary to the extent possible.

But many of the shortcomings we have identified really relate to the issue of funding. As Giorgia explained, the Court has been essentially reliant on voluntary contributions throughout its life and this has made it incredibly difficult for the Court. They have struggled and they have done so much on both a tight budget and an insecure budget. Many states have made important contributions, but more contributions are needed.

At this stage, the Court currently does not have enough funding to complete its work, which becomes all the more significant in light of the enormous development this year of the surrender of Charles Taylor, the former president of Liberia, who has been indicted by the Court for his role, or alleged role, in backing the Revolutionary United Front rebel group.

This is a huge trial, we think it going to be a very big moment, an opportunity for the people of Sierra Leone to see justice done, but also for the world to see that when there are allegations of these kind of crimes, no one is above the rule of law, that even a sitting head of state could be indicted for these crimes. So, in this context, funding will be very important, including funding for outreach programs.

As many of you may know, the trial, Charles Taylor's trial, has been moved from Freetown to The Hague due to security concerns and in that context the Court will need to redouble its efforts to reach the local population in West Africa by bringing journalists, for example, from the region to watch the trial, civil society groups, and there will need to be funding to do that. And all of that is necessary so that the Court can continue and complete its work, which is so important to bringing justice for the crimes.

Cecelia Gardener, Esq. (General Council for the World Diamond Council)

My name is Cecelia Gardener, and in addition to my position with the Jewellers Vigilance Committee here in the United States, I'm the general counsel for an organization called the World Diamond Council. The World Diamond Council was formed to participate with governments and civil society groups in formulating something called the Kimberly Process.

The Kimberly Process is a mechanism to certify and control the movement of rough diamonds across international borders. The industry has been engaged, in partnership with governments and NGOs, in this process since just about the inception of the development of the Kimberly Process.

We have brought our expertise and our resources to the effort to try to educate people about our industry, to suggest mechanisms that we feel will be practical and effective in reducing the trade in conflict diamonds. We have worked well over the years with our partners. Ian and I know each other now for longer, I guess, than we care to really remember. But we have been working together mostly step-by-step in developing these systems, and we are very proud of the accomplishments that we've able to participate in, the context of the Kimberly Process. We feel it is a successful mechanism that monitors and controls the movement of rough diamonds across international borders.

The purpose of monitoring and controlling the movement of rough diamonds across international borders, of course, is to legitimize the legitimate trade of rough diamonds in order to prevent any conflict diamonds being entered into the stream of commerce, and I think through our work it has been acknowledged that the Kimberly Process has been effective in reducing the amount of conflict diamonds being inserted into the stream of commerce to down to less than one percent.

Having said that, we acknowledge that the Kimberly Process is a mechanism invented by humans and therefore probably has some room for improvement and we will continue to work to improve and to make more effective the Kimberly Process in order to improve and to get down to zero the number of conflict diamonds that are entering the trade. You must understand how important it is to the diamond industry to reduce the trade in conflict diamonds down to next to zero. We have a zero-tolerance policy for conflict diamonds.

There is a wealth of info about the Kimberly Process, about the good that diamonds do for development in many nations across the world. There are 22 countries that produce diamonds. That information is available on a website hosted by the World Diamond Council. It's www.diamondfacts.org. You have to put an 's' in there, there's more than one fact on the website, www.diamondfacts.org, and I urge you to visit it because a lot of your questions will be answered there about the Kimberly Process.

I also want to mention very briefly the fact that in addition to the Kimberly Process, the industry has volunteered a system of warranties that is implemented and applicable not just to rough diamonds, but also to polished loose diamonds and jewellery containing diamonds. And what this requires is for sellers of diamonds to warrant to their buyers that the diamonds have been traded consistent with Kimberly Process and with UN sanctioning provision and then each person who buys them in turn warrants their sales of diamonds to their purchasers on down to the retail store level, so retail stores are in a position to assure consumers that the diamonds they buy have been traded consistent with national legislation and the Kimberly Process laws, as well as UN sanctioning provisions. The system of warranties is a robust system that covers not just the movement of diamond across international borders but everything that happens to those diamonds until they reach retail stores. I should also remind you that there is a world of industrial diamonds out there that never reach retail stores but are also covered by the Kimberly Process, and the system of warranting pertains to those sales as well.

The whole idea here is to ensure that there are no conflict diamonds traded in the pipeline of diamonds. We have developed a sort of diamond pipeline chart which we fondly call the 'spaghetti chart' because it looks like a bowl of spaghetti. So the supply side system for diamonds in the world is highly complex and we feel the system of warranties works all the way down through to the retail sales so customers can be sure that their diamonds are being traded consistent with the Kimberly Process.

Again, I would urge you to visit the website, www.diamondfacts.org, to get lots of questions asked about the prosperity and development opportunities that diamonds bring to many countries. We've been working hard in Sierra Leone and elsewhere to make sure that the people who are involved in the trade benefit from their work in the trade, and we support a number of initiatives that address development worldwide. So, with that, I will turn it to Ian.

Ian Smillie (Partnership Africa Canada)

I first went to Sierra Leone in 1967 to teach school. I was very young. I was only seven. I've seen Sierra Leone from those years when it was almost – it was just a newly independent country. I've seen it go through all the trials and tribulations of the last almost forty years. I've spent quite a bit of time in Sierra Leone over the past ten years. I've seen the war at its worst, as it's portrayed in the film. I've seen it come out of the war. I was on the UN Security Council expert panel that looked at the connection between diamonds and guns in Sierra Leone. And our NGO has been campaigning on this issue and then working on the design and the negotiation and the management of the Kimberly Process since then. There's nothing in that film, if you've seen it,

there's nothing in that film that is worse than what actually happened in Sierra Leone. What happened there was terrible. And it didn't go on for two hours, it went on for ten years. It was a long, long time before the international community took an interest in Sierra Leone. But Sierra Leone is at peace now. Sierra Leone is trying to reconstruct, it's trying to rebuild.

Ironically, when UNAMSIL was there, we spent collectively, all of us who pay taxes in the world, we spent a billion dollars a year on Sierra Leone. Now, apart from UN agencies and DFID, and USAID to a certain extent, there's almost no foreign aid going into Sierra Leone. Almost all the bilateral donors have started to look elsewhere. So we have a country that went through the wringer for ten years while we spent a huge amount of money trying to snuff out a bad war, and we're actually not there for the reconstruction. I think there's something ironic and tragic about that.

Cecelia's talked a little about the Kimberly Process. The Kimberly Process is a little more than three years old, and if I was to rate its success on a scale on one to ten I would give it about a 7.5. It's not perfect. It demonstrated over the past year that there are a number of leaks in the boat, but the governments that are part of this, and the industry and the NGOs have worked hard to try and patch up the leaks. The amazing thing about the Kimberly Process is that it's a voluntary agreement, no government has to join. If you do join you have to pass laws to demonstrate that you are in compliance with the terms and conditions of the Kimberly Process. So that if you are a member it has to force of law in your country. The Kimberly Process has the force of law in 71 different countries now, so it's extremely important now. There is no major diamond-producing country or trading country or processing country that is not a member of the Kimberly Process.

The Kimberly Process needs to be more proactive, it needs to be faster, and tougher. And the film, although the film describes a situation in Sierra Leone in 1999, it's a good reminder of what the Kimberly Process is all about. It's not just about stopping conflict diamonds, it's about making sure they never come back. There's a bigger issue where diamonds are concerned, at least we think it's a bigger issue, and that is how diamonds are mined.

In the countries that suffer most from conflict diamonds, DRC, Sierra Leone, Angola, Liberia, diamonds are almost all alluvial diamonds; they're spread over hundreds of square miles. They're not very far from the surface; you don't need a huge investment to get at them. They're mined by artisanal diggers. There's very little by way of large companies involved in this. It's a very informal kind of arrangement. The diggers earn on average a dollar a day, or maybe 75 cents a day and a cup of rice for lunch. There are a million if not 1.3 million artisanal diamond diggers in Africa. This is a very large issue for the diamond industry. They produce something between 10-15% of the world's gem diamonds. And what we're working on now, a number of NGOs and industry representatives and government, is something that is parallel to the Kimberly system. It's called the Diamond Development Initiative, DDI we call it. I've got a few brochures on it, but there's a lot of information is on our website. And the idea is to try and do something about this problem of artisanal diamond diggers. The Kimberly Process is a regulatory system. It's about laws and rules and about what you must do and what you should not do. Our contention is that if you want to do something about this kind of diamond digging in Africa you really have to have development solutions, economic solutions, as well as regulatory solutions.

So we think that the coming story for the diamond industry is a development story. And we think in many ways that it's as big a challenge, if not bigger, than the Kimberly Process, and certainly as important.

Tonderai Chikuhwa (Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict)

Thank you very much to Canada for convening the briefing. We're very glad for the opportunity to participate in the discussion. I'm with the office of the Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict. But before this assignment I spent two years as child protection advisor for the Special Representative of the Secretary General in Sierra Leone, where the brief was essentially

to negotiate release of children from armed forces, particularly from Liberia, as that peace process was underway, as well as release of children from the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, and to advocate for children in Sierra Leone in the post-conflict and to build programs for the kids coming out of the conflict.

I think a lot has been written, a lot is known, about what happens to children in the midst of conflict, so perhaps I will not say too much about that. I think you already have some quite graphic information and mental images of that, but perhaps what I could dwell on for a moment or so is what happens to children after the ink is drying on the peace agreements, in other words this whole area of post conflict healing and reintegration.

The programmes, when you look at them on paper, are quite neat, are quite well-defined, but on the ground things are very, very messy. And we have tremendous challenges, and I think it's important to be aware of some of those nuances, including the kind of reporting and the kind of writing that we do. I would say that a lot has to do with the fact that nature of conflict is changing. Not only are civilians, women, children, the elderly, now are the primary victims of conflict, but children have also become the primary instruments of atrocities against other children, against their own families, against their own communities. And this has incredible implications in terms of post-conflict dimensions.

What we found in Sierra Leone, for instance, was that the whole issue of reintegration and healing was certainly a matter of bringing some sort of healing to the children who had passed through, been subjected to terrible experiences, who had been forced to do terrible things. And this is a process that you can say in a program plan: we're going to have a three month process of identities families and bringing some healing, but what's important to understand is that children heal at different rates. There are many, many factors involved. And so it becomes a negotiation process with children, a healing and a negotiation process to get them to accept that they have to go back to their families. This is not an easy or clear-cut business.

But equally it becomes a negotiation process with families and with communities. Because these are children who have often committed terrible atrocities. Some of the worse atrocities in Sierra Leone were committed by children themselves. So it becomes a negotiation and a healing process with communities and with families to get them to accept their children back. Typically the anatomy of the program with children in the post-conflict begins with an extraction process, what's called the disarmament, demobilization. And then they go into what's called interim care centres set up by NGOs, typically by UNICEF, for a short period of time, while the second phase of the program for children kicks in, family tracing and reunification, and then the reintegration once the families have been traced.

But the problem is that a lot of the children that we deal with are children who are completely lost. If you can imagine in Sierra Leone, for instance, I dealt with children who have been associated with the fighting for six years. They had been abducted from the school at the age of nine. And in those six years they had been subjected to unimaginable things. And there are complex techniques that are used to sever children from their communities, to sever them from themselves, from their own consciousness. So when we're talking about lost children we're not just talking about children who were abducted in one part of the country and moved to another part of the country, we're speaking about children who are spiritually lost as well. Children who in the process cannot say 'my name is Abu, or my name is Michael, and I come from here.' So the beginnings of a process of tracing their families is very difficult and very complex process. And it's a process of getting to know a child because it may be months before the child even opens their mouth to say anything at all.

And so techniques I used, we used a lot of video footage of the children for instance, playing, speaking, and typically, for instance, a young boy who could not tell me his name, where they have come from, an older child may say, 'well, I don't know the name of this boy but we were taken at around this time in this part of the country.' And so we may take the video footage to that

part of the country. And parents and communities are looking for their kids, so it becomes a detective work.

But I make this point because our conceptions of the process, and the way donors approach this, is very inelastic. There is a donor funding for support of an interim care centre for six months and a reintegration for a centre for a year afterwards. And yet I've had children in some of the interim care centres for a period of two years because, either you cannot find families for them, or, indeed, when you find the family, you have conversation with the head of the household, the father, who says, 'indeed this is my child, and I thank God this child is alive, and I've looked for this child for five years. But I cannot accept this child back into the family, because I have three other children and they are terrified by the prospect of his returning. And when I look into his eyes, I see he is no longer a child and I am also afraid of him. I cannot accept him back in my family.' And so, this now presents complex challenges for what happens to children afterwards, for their healing, for their reintegration. Because our baseline, our foundation, really is that the only real chance for children to heal is back in their communities and in their families. So there is no short-circuiting this, there is no shortcut to this. It's a point that is important to stress because as we thinking about resources of children, about the healing of children, about the reintegration of children, we have to think more elastically, more creatively about additional resources for communities and families to be able to heal and to be able to absorb their children. This is a very critical point.

In Sierra Leone, we demobilized formally in the children's program 6,857 children. I would estimate that we missed at least half as many. Of the 6,857 children, there were 20% girls. And of the half as many that we missed, I would say that 80% of those were girls. I think the message here really is that we are bypassing and missing the girls in this process, and this is also a very important area for us to focus on collectively. And there are many reasons for this that we can get into it question and answer, but I think that this is a very conspicuous gap. And it has much to do with the mental images that we have. When we say 'child soldier' the image that comes to mind is of the 13 year old carrying the AK-47. And yet, children serve all sorts of roles in armed conflict, including girls. And the fact that we don't see them in our mind's eye when we say or when we speak about child soldiers, or when we see them on CNN, that has severe implications for what happens to children in the post-conflict, and the resources and programs for them.

Jimmie Briggs (Journalist and author): My remarks will be much shorter, much more briefer, thanks to Tonderai's very thorough presentation. As you were speaking I was checking off notes that I was going to say in my presentation, so thank you for shortening mine. I just first of all want to thank Michael and the Canadian Mission and the UNCA and the staff for organizing this event and hosting us to come today for tonight's screening of Blood Diamond. It's truly an honour and a pleasure for me to be here and participate on the panel with the other members. And I will be very brief, especially now.

As a journalist, I first discovered this issue of child soldiers and war-affected children eight years ago. At the time, I was working as a reporter for Time magazine, and I was sent to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was then still known as Zaire, and I had done a lot of stories here in the States looking at juvenile violence and gang culture, but even going to a place like Zaire, the Congo, and seeing these kids, these young kids, boys and girls, armed, carrying AK-47s, carrying grenades, carrying other weapons, was very striking, it was very moving. And I resolved, when I left, to come back to the States to explore the issue further.

The timing was perfect because it was around the time when the Mitchell Report was being released and was having an impact both internally at this institution but was being discussed in foreign policy circles. Despite what was happening within the international, and here with NGOs, I didn't see much coverage or much exploration of the issue from the media. So I guess in my brief remarks I want to talk about the importance of keeping this issue of child soldiers on the front pages, in front of our attention. If anything, I just want to gently disagree with Tonderai about the

stories, because I feel that the general public, whether it's in the States or in Europe or in Asia or Latin America, wherever, I thought that there is still a lot of ignorance about what these young people go through. I should maybe break point to say it's not just boys, it's also girls.

Just this past November I was in the Congo again, and I was struck by the hundreds, and in some areas thousands of adolescent girls who had been a part of the conflict there as child soldiers, but had also been survivors of sexual violence, of rape. And I think that in the rehabilitation and response to these former child soldiers, what Tonderai said, I agree with everything he said, but also want to add as well that there needs to be more response to the needs of girls along gender lines. It's not enough that they're disarmed and they go to a centre and then go back home eventually, but many of these girls are forced to become the "wives" of these adult commanders, or they're gang-raped or they're passed around. And often – if they do survive their experiences - they've contracted some sort of sexually-transmitted disease, or become pregnant, or maybe not able to have kids at all. And many other cases that I saw, whether it's Uganda, Rwanda, Congo or Columbia even, the girls didn't feel that there was space, that it was secure for them to come forward, even in the DDR process, and share what happened to them based on their gender.

I think the movie *Blood Diamond*, one of the most striking things about it is that Hollywood is looking at the issue of diamonds but also children in war. At least in the States it's not an image that we're used to seeing, kids with guns fighting in foreign lands. We're used to urban violence but not full-on fighting. And I think, from my point of view, there should be greater advocacy. We have the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, we have the Special Representative's office, we have the UN, but I think there needs to be a stronger non-governmental, community, grassroots-based advocacy because often, as a journalist, when I was going to these countries, talking to these child soldiers, many of them who still had their guns in their hands, the thing is, I always tell people the hardest part is getting to them, getting past their commanders, getting into areas where it was safer to talk to them, that was the hardest part because, more often than not, no one ever asked them about their experiences, whether you're a journalist or whoever, they're not used to telling their stories. And they want to tell what's happening to them, so that situation needs to be changed. And so again I want to express my gratitude for being here and for this event being organized.

About the Panellists

Jimmie Briggs – journalist and author on children and armed conflict

From covering violence in minority communities to investigating human rights abuses, the personal stories of disadvantaged youth have been the focus of Jimmie Briggs' decade-long career. Over the last eight years he has focused on child soldiers and the impact of war on childhood. As a reporter at LIFE, Briggs was awarded the John Bartlow Martin Award from Northwestern University for a story on the Gulf War's impact on children and became a finalist for the National Magazine Award. In the summer of 1998, he earned an honorable mention in the Dorothea Lange-Paul Taylor Prize competition, and an Individual Project Fellowship from the Open Society Institute to study children in war. A year later, Briggs received a commendation from the Congressional Black Caucus for his coverage of AIDS in the black American community. He has written for *The Washington Post*, *The Village Voice*, *EMERGE*, *VIBE*, *El Semanal*, *The Source*, *Junior Scholastic*, *The Crisis*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Essence* and *LIFE*. As a teacher, he has taught journalism at the New School University, led writing and photography workshops for youth in Spanish Harlem on behalf of the International Center of Photography, and in Kabul, Afghanistan for Seeds of Peace. His book on children and war, *Innocents Lost: When Child Soldiers Go To War*, was published by Basic Books in the fall of 2005. In the summer of 2006, Briggs was selected as a Carter Center Mental Health Journalism Fellow to complete a reported project on the psychosocial legacy of sexual violence in the eastern Democratic

Republic of Congo. Living in New York City, he is writing a book about violence against women in Iraq and helping produce a feature film based on his book about child soldiers.

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Tonderai Chikuhwa – Office of the SRSG for Children and Armed Conflict

A national of Sweden and Zimbabwe, Tonderai Chikuhwa holds a Bachelors degree in Political Science and International Studies from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Masters degree in Political Studies from the University of Cape Town in South Africa. He lectured on political science at the University of Cape Town prior to joining the United Nations. Chikuhwa is presently Programme Officer in the United Nations Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and also served as Child Protection Adviser to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone. In these capacities Chikuhwa has engaged in advocacy for children affected by armed conflict, as well as design and implementation of programmatic interventions for children in conflict and post-conflict situations. In his scholarship and research, Chikuhwa has concentrated particularly on issues of political and economic development in Africa, and as a Research Fellow with the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, he focused specifically on questions of international migration policy and protection of internally displaced populations.

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Ian Smillie – Kimberley Process/Partnership Africa Canada

Ian Smillie has lived and worked in Africa and Asia. He taught high school in Koidu, the centre of Sierra Leone's diamond area, in the late 1960s. He was a founder of the Canadian development organization, Inter Pares, and was Executive Director of CUSO, then Canada's largest NGO. As a development consultant he has undertaken feasibility studies and evaluation assignments on behalf of the OECD, several United Nations organizations, the Canadian, British and Irish governments, and a wide variety of development organizations. During 2000 he served on a UN Security Council Panel investigating the links between illicit weapons and the diamond trade in Sierra Leone. Ian Smillie is an Associate of the Humanitarianism & War project at Tufts University and was an adjunct professor at Tulane University between 1999 and 2002. He currently serves as Research Coordinator on Partnership Africa Canada's 'Diamonds and Human Security Project' and is an active participant in the Diamond Development Initiative (DDI). He has been an NGO participant in the Kimberley Process since its inception. He has written several books on development subjects, the most recent of which is *The Charity of Nations: Humanitarian Action in a Calculating World* (with Larry Minear, 2004). Ian Smillie was appointed to the Order of Canada in 2003.

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Cecilia L. Gardner, Esq., President & CEO, Jewellers Vigilance Committee

Cecilia L. Gardner is currently the President, CEO and General Counsel of the Jewelers Vigilance Committee (JVC), a not-for-profit trade association dedicated to compliance with laws pertaining to the jewelry industry. She also holds the position of General Counsel to the World Diamond Council, an international association whose purpose is to end the trade in conflict diamonds. She is a member of the Board of Directors of the Women's Jewelry Association and the Board of Directors of the Jewelers Charity Fund for Children. She also serves as General Counsel and Director of the United States Kimberley Process Authority Institute. A graduate of Smith College and Hofstra University School of Law, Ms. Gardner's professional career included positions as an Examining Attorney with the Department of Investigation of the City of New York, and fifteen years as a federal prosecutor at the Office of the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of New York. As an Assistant United States Attorney, she specialized in narcotics, money laundering, organized crime and white-collar cases. Her positions included appointments as the Deputy Chief of the Narcotics Unit and as Attorney-in-Charge in the Long Island Office. Her work included numerous international investigations and prosecutions. Ms.

Gardner was an Adjunct Professor at Hofstra University School of Law, where she taught International Criminal Law and Advanced Criminal Procedure.

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Since 2004, Ms. Tortora has represented the Special Court for Sierra Leone with U.N. member states, the Court's Management Committee, human rights groups and others in New York. Previously, she served for two years as the Freetown Liaison Officer of the Special Court, negotiating the Court's Headquarters Agreement and establishing its working relationship with the Government of Sierra Leone. Prior to working with the Special Court, Ms. Tortora was an Adviser to the Permanent Mission of Sierra Leone to the United Nations, helping to negotiate the Agreement and Statute establishing the Special Court. She also advised on negotiations on the creation of an International Criminal Court. In 1999, Ms. Tortora worked in Albania and Kosovo as Deputy Director of a project of the International Crisis Group that collected and analysed information from witnesses of serious violations of international humanitarian law, in coordination with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, and was a contributor to the report, *Reality Demands: Documenting Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Kosovo*. In 1998, she conducted research in the Balkans for No Peace Without Justice's *Report on Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law in Kosovo*.

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Elise Keppler – Human Rights Watch expert, Special Court for Sierra Leone

Elise Keppler is counsel with the International Justice Program at Human Rights Watch. In March 2004 and April 2005, she conducted missions to Freetown, Sierra Leone to assess the operations of the Special Court for Sierra Leone. These missions formed the basis of two reports she authored, *Bringing Justice: the Special Court for Sierra Leone* and *Justice in Motion: The Trial Phase of the Special Court*. From 2003 to 2006, Elise Keppler worked intensively on Human Rights Watch's campaign to ensure that Liberian president Charles Taylor would be brought to justice for alleged crimes committed during the brutal conflict in Sierra Leone. This included a leadership role in the Campaign Against Impunity, a coalition of African and international civil society groups created to press for Taylor's surrender to the Special Court. In her work at the International Justice Program, Elise Keppler also focuses on the International Criminal Court (ICC). In 2005, she was deeply involved in Human Rights Watch's campaign to ensure a U.N. Security Council referral of the situation in Darfur to the ICC. In 2004, she worked for defeat of renewal of U.N. Security Council resolution 1487, which would have given immunity to certain United Nations personnel before the ICC. Prior to joining Human Rights Watch, Elise Keppler worked as a litigation associate at Schulte Roth & Zabel LLP.

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