



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



**Statement by Ms. Leila Zerrougui,
Special Representative of the Secretary-General
for Children and Armed Conflict**

**High-Level Leaders' Roundtable:
"Uphold the Norms that Safeguard Humanity"**

**World Humanitarian Summit
Istanbul, 24 May 2016**

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I am here today to give commitments on behalf of the entire United Nations.

As an organisation, we face increasingly complex crises with more diverse actors operating in conflict. This Summit offers a critical opportunity for the global community to reaffirm principles that serve as the foundations of humanitarian action, and, ultimately, safeguard humanity.

Due to the multitude of crises today and the denigration in the respect of international law, we face the highest levels of displacement seen since the Second World War. The United Nations is committed to supporting Member States to find lasting solutions for displaced persons, the vast majority of which are women and children, with an emphasis on treating all people with dignity and respect. In order to achieve this, we commit to leading and contributing to the progressive human-rights based development of international, regional and national refugee law and more effective implementation of legal standards in practice.

As an institution, one of our core aims is to provide relief for those affected by armed conflict. The United Nations commits to deliver rapid humanitarian assistance, including to hard to reach areas. In these responses, we will prioritise making people safer, preserving their dignity and reducing vulnerabilities. As an international community, we must all support and enable the work of those striving to provide humanitarian assistance. This requires Member States and parties to conflict to recognize and respect the principles of humanity, neutrality, impartiality

and independence, as well as the inviolability of United Nation's premises, which are increasingly targeted. We will regularly remind parties of these principles.

The United Nations also commits to intensify monitoring, investigating and reporting human rights violations and abuses, as well as violations of international humanitarian law, with particular attention to the plight of women and children. We pledge to use this monitoring to strengthen our advocacy with parties to conflict to stop and prevent violations. Advocacy efforts will have a particular focus on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and mine action. We commit to supporting Member States to develop strategies to better protect vulnerable populations and civilian infrastructure during military operations.

In accordance with the Secretary-General's Human Rights up Front Initiative, we commit to use all appropriate fora to speak out and systematically condemn serious violations of international law. We will also provide strong support to national and international accountability efforts. In this regard, the United Nations reiterates its full support for the International Criminal Court and urges Member States to fully cooperate with the institution.

Finally, I will seize this opportunity to bring the voice of girls and boys, who are paying a very high price in conflict. They are abducted, recruited and used, suffer sexual violence, killed and maimed, and their schools and hospitals are destroyed. The commitments I have just outlined are of course also for children, but I emphasize the need for all of us to work together to put an end to these violations and secure their future, which is that of every nation.