



The Dallaire Initiative takes over valuable Child Soldiers International programs

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia, June 5, 2019/CNW/ - The Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative (Dallaire Initiative) and Child Soldiers International (CSI) announced today that the Dallaire Initiative is taking over the international programs from CSI, which is officially closing its operations on June 7, 2019. The Dallaire Initiative is honoured to carry forward CSI's valuable contributions to the cause, and CSI is confident and proud to hand over its work to them.

Dr. Shelly Whitman, Executive Director of the Dallaire Initiative, said: "We place immense value on the work CSI has undertaken as the founders of the global movement to prevent the recruitment and use of child soldiers, as well as the relationships and collaboration we have enjoyed over the years. Although we are sad to lose them as collaborators and colleagues, we wanted to ensure that the important work started by CSI lives on through the handover of key existing programs and resources. CSI's legacy and work, particularly on global advocacy and community-based prevention and reintegration, will continue to advance the body of knowledge pertaining to understanding and preventing the recruitment and use of children as soldiers. We are also confident that it will better inform our activities, optimize our impact globally and ensure the world understands the need to continue to put resources towards ending this tragedy."

Isabelle Guitard, Director of Child Soldiers International, said: "We are thrilled that our global work to prevent the military recruitment and use of children will be taken forward by the Dallaire Initiative. Like us, they believe that prevention is better than cure. They are renowned and respected advocates of children's rights in conflict, with whom we have worked closely for years in our mutual efforts to prevent the involvement of children in armed conflict. We know that our work and legacy will continue through their hard-working and passionate team."

The Dallaire Initiative is taking over the DRC and South Sudan community led prevention and reintegration programs. Both programs compliment the already existing programs the Dallaire Initiative is conducting in South Sudan and the DRC. In addition, the Dallaire Initiative will host and continue the Child Soldiers World Index, and its global research, policy and advocacy work. The World Index is an important resource for child protection actors and the Dallaire Initiative is eager to not only take it on, but combine it with their exciting new Knowledge for Prevention research that aims to create a better global estimate on the numbers of children recruited and used as soldiers. A statistically informed global estimate, combined with the World Index platform, has the power to demonstrate progress on the issue as well as to continue to galvanize support to continue the fight to improve efforts to end this crime against humanity.

The Dallaire Initiative will not be taking on CSI's UK program campaign. This will be taken over by the London-based Child Rights International Network (CRIN).

Both CSI and the Dallaire Initiative have championed the belief that it is immoral for adults to use children in war. Collaboration on international advocacy and implementation by both organizations on the OPAC, the Safe Schools Declaration, the Paris Principles and the Vancouver Principles demonstrated this common aim. Children should not fight wars and one day we will make their recruitment and use “unthinkable”.

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About the Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative

Founded by retired lieutenant-general Roméo Dallaire, the [Roméo Dallaire Child Soldiers Initiative \(Dallaire Initiative\)](#) believes that in order to progressively end the recruitment and use of children as soldiers, the world must focus on effective prevention. It is the Dallaire Initiative's unique approach to affecting beliefs, attitudes and behavior change through our pedagogical approaches that leverage our relationship to work with the security sector through a prevention-oriented lens, that defines our organizational imperative and creates lasting impacts well beyond the immediate interventions. The Dallaire Initiative co-authored the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in 2017 with the Government of Canada.

About Child Soldiers International

[Child Soldiers International \(CSI\)](#) was formerly the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Established in 1998 by a group of leading human rights organisations, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and Save the Children, its original purpose was to campaign for a human rights treaty to prevent the military recruitment of children and their use in conflict. This treaty, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict (**OPAC**), entered into force in 2002. In 2011 it became an independent UK registered charity, connected with a network of local and national child rights and child protection organisations across the world. [CSI will close its doors on 7 June 2019](#), due to an increasingly challenging operating and funding environment for small NGOs.

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