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EDITOR'S NOTE

The plight of child soldiers, the widespread use of landmines and small arms, and images of children lined up in refugee camps awaiting food or medical care have helped to sensitize the international community to the suffering inflicted on children during armed conflict. The protection and security of children is traditionally approached from a human rights perspective, focusing on treaties and conventions such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Surprisingly, it is only recently that the question of child protection has been approached from a 'security-oriented' perspective. Efforts such as Security Council resolutions 1261, 1314 and 1379 are helping to raise awareness and reframe child protection as a human security issue.

Ensuring the security of children in armed conflicts demands new thinking and partnerships that combine the expertise and action of disarmament, human rights, humanitarian and development specialists. In this *Disarmament Forum* we introduce our readers to the special needs and circumstances of children and their security in times of conflict. We study the promises made by the United Nations and the international community to protect children, investigate the impact of small arms on children, and present the urgent topic of juvenile justice in relation to counter-terrorism operations.

The next issue of *Disarmament Forum* will look ahead to the first review conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We will be exploring some of the key topics to be addressed at the review, as well as examining institutional issues emerging from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

We invite you to discover UNIDIR's new web site. Visit www.unidir.org to:

- read or download full-text UNIDIR publications and articles from *Disarmament Forum*;
- search our comprehensive database of UNIDIR publications and activities;
- participate in our 'Roundtable' through e-di@logue mailings and 'for comment' papers;
- learn about the Institute, its background, funding, personnel and mandate; and
- subscribe to *UNIDIR Highlights* so you will be automatically notified via email about future events at the Institute, new publications and changing material on our site.

The Secretary-General's Expert Group on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education has wrapped up its two-year study. The Group was tasked with assessing the current state of disarmament and non-proliferation education at all levels, and recommending ways to promote disarmament education and training. The study reflects consultations with a range of actors—from civil society,

NGOs, advocacy groups, international organizations and governments, as well as activists, artists and educators—who shared their experiences and helped to establish the ground work for future collaboration and partnerships.

UNIDIR participated in the preparation of the study and will be working with our partners to implement its recommendations and encourage further work on this subject. The study, its annexes and background materials are available on-line at < <http://disarmament.un.org/education/study.html> > .

Against a background of unresolved missile defence and missile non-proliferation issues, increasingly intensive use of space technologies, and lack of progress on PAROS in the Conference on Disarmament, there is a renewed interest in outer space issues. The Institute, in cooperation with Project Ploughshares and the Simons Centre for Peace and Disarmament Studies, will host the seminar *Outer Space and Global Security* on 26–27 November 2002. Sponsored by the Simons Foundation of Canada, the seminar will address the current and future uses of outer space, as well as measures to preserve space for peaceful purposes. The first issue of *Disarmament Forum* in 2003 will also address outer space security issues.

In response to widespread concerns about how to respond to the threat of nuclear terrorism, radiological weapons and ‘dirty bombs’, UNIDIR will host the conference *International Cooperation in the Combat against Nuclear Terrorism and the Role of Nuclear Arms Control* on 17–18 December 2002. Jointly organized by UNIDIR, Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, and Germany’s Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, the meeting will analyse the potential threat and technical capacities of terrorists, and how arms control, verification and transparency can combat these threats.

UNIDIR Resident Senior Fellow Jozef Goldblat has fully revised and updated his well-known 1994 reference work on disarmament. *Arms Control—the new guide to negotiations and agreements*, a joint publication of PRIO and SIPRI, surveys all major agreements of the last half century. Its accompanying CD-ROM contains full texts and excerpts from over 150 relevant arms control and disarmament treaties and agreements. Available from Sage Publications.

Lastly, we welcome Geoffrey Mugumya, Project Leader, and Shukuko Koyama, Project Assistant, to the Institute. Together they will analyse select small arms and light weapons collection programmes, identify the criteria for and characteristics of successful programmes and incentive schemes, and seek to identify best practice for the project ‘Weapons for Development: Lessons Learned from Weapons Collection Programmes’.

Kerstin Vignard

SPECIAL COMMENT

In over fifty countries around the world, children suffer in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Children's insecurity in times of conflict manifests itself in numerous insidious ways. At present, it is estimated that there are 22 million children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. Children are increasingly targeted, abducted and, in many cases, recruited as combatants and trained to operate small arms and light weapons. The impact of war on girls is particularly damaging, as they are sometimes abducted and undergo sexual abuse and enslavement during armed conflict. There is undoubtedly a correlation between the easy availability of small arms and the dramatic rise in the victimization of children. It is estimated that of the 4 million war-related deaths since 1990, 90% were civilians—80% of which were women and children who fell victim to the 'misuse' of small arms and light weapons.

Over the past decade the United Nations has increasingly focused on the issue of children affected by armed conflict, working to strengthen norms and modify the role of its operational actors. The United Nations Security Council has become actively engaged on this issue, as underscored by adoption of landmark Security Council resolution 1261 and resolutions 1314 and 1379—all of which affirm that the protection of children affected by armed conflict is a peace and security issue. Children's concerns are also being integrated into United Nations peace operations, through mandates, reports, child protection advisers and training.

There is an impressive array of international human rights and humanitarian instruments to protect children from the consequences of war—most notably the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides an important normative framework. International standards have also been strengthened—the recent entry into force of the Convention of the Rights of the Child's Optional Protocol and the classification of war crimes against children in the Rome Statute are particularly significant. Additionally, major United Nations conferences and Special Sessions, such as the Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects and the General Assembly Special Session on Children, have served to fortify standards and, in particular, to highlight the interconnection between issues such as small arms, HIV/AIDS and children affected by armed conflict.

We have seen a significant increase in advocacy and awareness, as well as tangible progress in developing and advancing child protection. Children and armed conflict has been placed high on the international political agenda, as well as on the agendas of major regional organizations. The well-being of children in situations of armed conflict is now being included in peace agendas and has become a priority focus in post-conflict peace building. Warring parties have made concrete commitments for the protection of children. And there has been a major growth in NGO advocacy and programme activities.

Yet while we note commendable progress on many fronts, to the children tormented by the effects of armed conflicts, our efforts to bring about an 'era of application' of protective norms and

standards fall short both of their expectations and of universally agreed standards. Children continue to be targeted despite commitments made (and sometimes met) by parties to various conflicts. The United Nations and the international community must persist in their search for more effective ways to monitor and ensure compliance with the international standards that protect children—the plight of these children deserves our special attention and action.

Serious gaps in knowledge can constrain international efforts on behalf of children. I am optimistic that the newly established international research network on children and armed conflict housed at the Social Science Research Council will soon bring international expertise to bear on the assessment of and response to pressing child protection issues.

Ultimately, I believe that our collective ambitions—as governments, United Nations partners and NGOs—for the agenda of children affected by armed conflict should be the following: *one*, to channel our various actions and initiatives into a critical mass of activities whose impact can be truly felt on the ground; *two*, to aim to build a self-sustaining culture of advocacy, of protection and of response for the benefit of children affected by armed conflict; *three*, to embark on an ‘era of application’ on the ground—the application of international and local norms for the protection of children; and, *finally*, our collective efforts should give rise to a major social and political movement for the protection of children affected by armed conflict. The experience of the last few years has demonstrated that these objectives are not utopian, that when we work together we can move mountains, that concrete and targeted actions can yield tangible results in pushing forward this agenda.

I am heartened by UNIDIR’s dedication of this issue of *Disarmament Forum* to children and security. Not only does this underscore the need to take a collective, multi-disciplinary approach to addressing the situation of children in conflict, it will encourage sustained attention to this issue, particularly amongst audiences that do not traditionally focus on child protection.

Olara A. Otunnu

Under-Secretary-General

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

Protecting children in armed conflict: from commitment to compliance

Anatole AYISSI

We will work carefully to protect children from the scourge of war ... in order to give children everywhere a peaceful and secure future. ... We are prepared to make available the resources to meet these commitments.

Plan of Action of the World Summit for Children, September 1990

The resources that were promised at the [1990] Summit ... have yet to fully materialize.

Declaration of the Special Session on Children, May 2002

The world has fallen short of achieving most of the goals of the World Summit for Children.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Crisis and commitment

Children are increasingly victims of armed conflicts as 'both the targets and the perpetrators of violence'.¹ Although victimizing children in times of war is not new, the scale and scope of this sad phenomenon today is without precedent. Indeed, historical comparative analyses show that a child living in a war-torn society today runs a higher risk of being maimed, raped or used as a combatant than a child who lived in equally violent circumstances in the past.²

The international community has developed an important set of politically and legally binding instruments that highlight the absolute necessity to guarantee unconditional protection to children in armed hostilities. Unfortunately, these normative endeavours are not adequately backed by political will. Compliance with established norms remains, essentially, a dream. This paper (1) gives a brief overview of the rising hopes and glittering promises from the worldwide efforts aimed at protecting children in armed conflicts, (2) analyses the dwindling expectations from and growing scepticism about these endeavours, and (3) elaborates practical steps towards ending impunity and enforcing compliance with the rule of law.

The analysis takes as its framework primarily what has been happening within the context of the United Nations system since the signing of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the World Summit for Children in 1990.

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Remark on the 'international community'

A significant part of this paper is an analysis of the international community's last decade of mixed discourse on the protection of children in armed conflict. The paper juxtaposes the international community's rhetoric in favour of the protection of children in armed conflict with the (counter) discourse on the lack of concrete commitment from world leaders. A superficial reading may thus generate the strange impression that the international community commits itself to protect children in armed conflicts while simultaneously castigating itself for its lack of commitment. Put another way, that 'those who are supposed to do the job are the same claiming that the job is not done'.³ Such a perception is partially due to the ubiquitous nature of the 'international community'. Indeed, one of the fundamental characteristics of this community is that it is generally an anonymous entity (without a face) when it makes promises and pledges commitment; however, when the time comes to fulfil its promises and implement its decisions, the international community suddenly becomes endowed with an institutional face. Hence the curious feeling that the international community is both pledging to give a better future to every child and reproaching itself for falling short of this great promise.

A deeper analysis of the definition issue is beyond the scope of this paper.⁴ What is important to keep in mind is that, in multilateral diplomacy, promises are made and decisions are generally taken by leaders episodically meeting for a few days (and usually eager to conclude the deliberations as soon as possible and return home). But the implementation of these decisions is left to the international community's legitimate institutional representatives (the United Nations system for instance), which is unable to achieve anything unless the authors of these promises and decisions give the implementing institution the appropriate means and resources. Resources might be pledged, but they are rarely made fully available in a timely manner.

Protecting children in armed conflict: a world committed

The universal movement to protect children from the scourge of war emerged right after the First World War. Moved by the fate of millions of children in this great tragedy, the newly created League of Nations established in 1919 a Committee for the Protection of Childhood. The continual degradation of child well-being within the post-war environment obliged an NGO called Save the Children International Union (SCIU) to advocate that the specificity of childhood be explicitly taken into account in reconstruction programmes. On 23 February 1923, SCIU adopted a Declaration of the Rights of the Child—also called the Geneva Declaration. On 26 September 1924, the League of Nations General Assembly endorsed the Geneva Declaration, which solemnly proclaimed in its Preamble that 'mankind owes to the child the best it has to give'.

After the Second World War, concerns over the fate of child safety in times of armed violence once again found a place on the international agenda. In 1946, the United Nations General Assembly created a Special Fund aimed at child welfare: UNICEF. According to its mission statement, 'UNICEF is committed to ensuring special protection for the most disadvantaged children', notably those children who are 'victims of war'.⁵

On 20 November 1959, the General Assembly adopted resolution 1386(XIV), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, which reiterated that 'mankind owes to the child the best it has to give'.

Meanwhile, other important humanitarian or human rights instruments raised awareness of the necessity to give children the best possible treatment not only in the extraordinary environment of armed violence, but also in ordinary circumstances. For instance, the 1948 Universal Declaration of

Human Rights reads, in article 25 (2), that ‘motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance’. The same considerations are found in the two 1966 International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and on Civil and Political Rights.

Efforts aimed at enhancing the protection of children on battlefields intensified by the mid-1970s. The United Nations General Assembly adopted, on 14 December 1974, the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict.⁶ In this Declaration, the General Assembly emphasized ‘the need to provide special protection of women and children belonging to the civilian population’.

In 1989, the international community finally adopted a Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Currently, the CRC is the multilateral treaty with the highest number of ratifications ever (191). This quasi-universal adhesion is a testament to the great interest that humanity places on child welfare in general, and the ideals embodied in the Convention in particular. The CRC is presently the only legally binding arrangement specifically aimed at children. While previous instruments have mentioned the special needs of children, the CRC cares about the child as a unique human being within the broader human community.

A key moment in this global commitment to child welfare was the World Summit for Children held in September 1990 in New York. The Summit adopted a World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children and a Plan of Action for implementing this Declaration. Through these two documents, the international community renewed its commitment to the urgent imperative of the protection of children caught in conflict areas.

In order to have sound knowledge of the fate of child victims of armed conflict and to be more effective in combating this tragedy, the United Nations General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to appoint an expert to undertake a comprehensive study on the impact of armed conflict on children. On 8 June 1994, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993, Ms Graça Machel was appointed to this task. Two years later, on 26 August 1996, she delivered her report on ‘The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children’. A key recommendation of the report was that a ‘Special Representative of the Secretary-General should be named to monitor implementation of this report and ensure that issues of children and war are kept high on international human rights, peace, security and development agendas’.⁷ The Secretary-General announced the appointment of Olara Otunnu in September 1999 to this position.

Alleviating the suffering of children in battle areas is considered to be such an eminent concern that it was deemed necessary to establish an optional protocol to the CRC specifically devoted to the issue. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, adopted on 25 May 2000, entered into force on 12 February 2002.

These great diplomatic and legal advances lead one to the conclusion that the world is determined to alleviate and prevent the suffering of children in armed conflicts. The situation on the ground tells another story. There are numerous unfulfilled promises, which generate substantial doubts and widespread scepticism about the real political will of the international community to make their actions speak as loud as their words.

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From commitment to disenchantment

The decade from 1990 to 2000 was supposed to be a decade of restored hope for children affected by armed conflict; it would evolve as an uncertain era of dwindling optimism and vanishing expectations.

1990–2000: A DECADE OF RISING HOPE

The issue of protection children brought together seventy-one Heads of State and Government on 30 September 1990 in New York. These decision-makers noted that ‘each day, countless children around the world ... suffer immensely as casualties of war and violence’ and they resolved to take action to guarantee child security in circumstances of armed violence. They adopted the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children. Among other important points, these leaders promised to ‘work carefully to protect children from the scourge of war and to take measures to prevent further armed conflicts, in order to give children everywhere a peaceful and secure future’.⁸

An ambitious (yet realistic) Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration in the 1990s was also adopted. The decade-long agenda recognized that ‘children need special protection in situations of armed conflict’ and emphasized the necessity ‘to build the foundation for a peaceful world where violence and war will cease to be acceptable means for settling disputes and conflicts’.⁹

Two years later, in its 1992 *State of the World’s Children*, UNICEF appropriately reminded world leaders of their promise to build ‘a new order for children’ and insisted that ‘the promise of the World Summit for Children should be kept’.¹⁰

On 25 August 1999, the fate of children in armed conflict was the order of the day at the Security Council, which, for the first time ever, adopted a thematic resolution entirely devoted to the protection of children in armed conflict (resolution 1261). Through this resolution, the Security Council condemned ‘... the targeting of children in situations of armed conflict, including killing and maiming, sexual violence, abduction and forced displacement, recruitment and use of children in armed conflict in violation of international law, and attacks on objects protected under international law, including places that usually have a significant presence of children such as schools and hospitals, and calls on all parties concerned to put an end to such practices’. Commenting on the adoption of this resolution, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy declared ‘This remarkable achievement is a major boost to efforts to protect the rights of millions of children who are killed, maimed, orphaned and driven from their homes by conflicts around the globe’.¹¹

In the view of the rich legal framework that has been set up in the last decade aimed at protecting children in armed conflicts, one might understandably assume that the international community has kept its promises to children. While it is true that a lot has been accomplished in terms of building norms and raising awareness, from the standpoint of practical action, too much remains undone. Graça Machel summarizes the last decade thusly: ‘collectively, we can be encouraged by the progress made But we still have very far to go before we can say that our promises to children are fulfilled’.¹²

1990–2000: A DECADE OF DWINDLING EXPECTATIONS

Indeed, more than a decade after the promises of the World Summit for Children and the expectations of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the worsening reality for child victims of armed conflicts compels us to conclude that the great opportunities offered by these extraordinary achievements were not seized. The international community sowed doubts about its capacity to abide by its own word, thus engendering frustration and bitterness. In his report entitled *We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children*, the United Nations Secretary-General observes that although ‘significant progress in a number of areas’¹³ has been made in the

implementation of the 1990 Plan of Action, this progress, as compared to the challenges we face, is 'not enough'.¹⁴ He observed that it would be honest to recognize that 'the world has fallen short of achieving most of the goals of the World Summit for Children'¹⁵ since 'many of the survival and development goals set by the Summit ... remain unfulfilled'.¹⁶ UNICEF agreed, noting that most of the 1990 promises to children are 'broken' and 'largely unfulfilled'.¹⁷

The most alarming sign of the world's lack of commitment is that the failure to translate promises into action was not because the goals were 'too ambitious or were technically beyond reach'; promises were not achieved simply 'because of insufficient investment'.¹⁸ The 1990 Declaration stated that 'there can be no task nobler than giving every child a better future' and world leaders offered great promise to children with this powerful and unequivocal statement: 'we are prepared to make available the resources to meet these commitments'.¹⁹ Despite the fact that the world contains a \$30 trillion global economy, 'the resources needed to achieve goals for all children have not been forthcoming in the necessary amounts and in the places where they are most needed'.²⁰

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Today, at the very moment the world community is repeatedly proclaiming its faith in the absolute and unconditional necessity to protect growing generations from the scourge of war, we are paradoxically confronted with the reality that 'perhaps more children have suffered from armed conflicts and violence since the [1990] Summit than at any comparable period in history'.²¹ In addition, the task to promote and build a viable world for children might have been more easily achieved ten years ago. The world is 'more unstable and more violent than it was in 1990 when leaders at the World Summit pledged to reach 27 goals for children and women by the year 2000'.²² Achieving the promises made to children a decade ago has 'become more daunting over the years, presenting us with an increasing number of new challenges'.²³

1990–2000: A DECADE OF GROWING DESPAIR

The scope of the enormous challenges the world faces with the plight of child victims of armed conflicts is hinted at in the following few statistics. Today, at least:

- 300,000 children are used as combatants on battlefields around the world,
- 2 million are deliberately murdered,
- 20 million are refugees or internally displaced persons,
- 5 million are handicapped,
- 12 million are abandoned,
- 1 million are orphans, and
- 10 million are severely traumatized due to violent conflict.²⁴

In Africa for instance, one of the regions where children are most affected by armed conflict, never before has the condition of children caught in battle areas been so desperate. To torture, maim, or kill children (or turn them into killers) is becoming an ordinary occurrence in most African conflict zones. Thanks to United Nations investigation teams, researchers and NGO personnel in the field, we

now know that in Liberia for instance, around 20% of the 60,000 combatants who fought in its civil war (1989–1997) were children. Thousands of ‘lost boys’ are currently wandering, starving, killing and dying in southern Sudan’s fighting zones. In Sierra Leone, the Revolutionary United Front and other fighting factions used children as combatants and human sacrifices. Maiming and raping children became a widespread ‘ritual of war’ in that country (as well as in Liberia).²⁵ They were at least 10,000 kids participating in fighting in Mozambique, including hundreds of little girls used as sex slaves.²⁶ A survey on children and war in Mozambique shows that throughout the sixteen years of armed violence, more than 90% of Mozambican children ‘were forcibly separated from their families; 77 per cent witnessed killings, usually in large numbers; 88 per cent witnessed physical abuse and/or torture; 51 per cent were physically abused or tortured; 63 per cent witnessed kidnapping and sexual abuse; 64 per cent were kidnapped from their families; 75 per cent of the kidnapped children were forced to work as porters; 28 per cent of the kidnapped children (all boys) were trained as combatants’.²⁷ In Uganda, ‘the LRA [Lord Resistance Army] ... has abducted nearly 10,000 children to be used as soldiers, porters and sex slaves. Many thousands are thought to have died while in LRA captivity’. As of this writing, more than 5,000 of these children are still missing.²⁸ Angola has ‘an estimated 3,000 child soldiers, a significant number of whom have been forcibly recruited from neighbouring countries’.²⁹ They are thousands in the Democratic Republic of Congo fighting for a ‘good cause’ they don’t—or no longer—understand.³⁰

Although Africa is currently the most visible symbol of the crisis of children in armed conflict, in other regions of the world, notably Asia and Latin America, thousands of kids are suffering the same fate. In Sri Lanka for instance, ‘after 18 years of continuous strife, a generation of young people across the country has been robbed of a normal childhood’.³¹ Also in this country, ‘some adults have used young people’s immaturity to their own advantage, recruiting and training adolescents for suicide bombings’.³² In 1999, ‘a UN report asserted that Taliban commanders in Afghanistan were enlisting child warriors younger than 14’. In Myanmar, ‘the army has been known to surround schools and forcibly recruit groups of children from 15 to 17 years of age’,³³ etc.

These are profoundly disturbing numbers. And yet the extreme difficulty of gathering data in conflict zones means that most of these figures are rough estimates, very often underestimates. Regardless, the most important thing is not accurate statistics—we must never lose sight of the fact that ‘each number and each statistic represents a child’s life’, that is, ‘someone’s son, daughter, sister or brother’.³⁴

The challenge of children victimized in armed conflicts is more than a legal failure or a political breakdown. We are not dealing here with a banal breach of law or a one-off humanitarian emergency. We are facing an unprecedented tragedy that challenges us as *human* (i.e. ‘civilized’) communities and questions our credibility as decision-makers.

Behind the political incapacity of the international community to keep its promises to children is evolving a great moral crisis, a crisis with significant consequences for the world’s future. ‘As today’s children are the citizens of tomorrow’s world, their survival, protection and development is the prerequisite for the future development of humanity’ and ‘there is no cause which merits a higher priority than the protection and development of children, on whom the survival, stability and advancement of all nations—and, indeed, of human civilization—depends’.³⁵

From commitment to compliance

The analyses above might give the impression of a deep cynicism about the capacity of the international community to protect children in armed conflicts. Understandably, the record shows

that, compared to the challenges faced on the one hand and promises made on the other, there might be reasonable doubt about the international community's commitment to children. Thankfully there seems to be the beginning of a real change in behaviours and attitudes.

The first positive change is about the *self-perception* and *self-evaluation* of the international community's performance. There is a growing shared feeling that not enough is being done. There is also a sustained effort to answer, in an objective and non-complacent way, the question 'what is going wrong and why?'³⁶ Appropriate action must follow, without delay, this new awareness since 'a child in danger is a child who cannot wait'.³⁷

The second constructive move is reflected in the great normative work realized in the last ten years. In addition, for the very first time in the history of the United Nations, the tragedy of child victims of armed conflicts is gradually emerging as a central concern and a top priority on the Security Council agenda.

But concrete deeds must follow this 'diplomatically correct' awareness. Compliance must follow commitment.

Crime and accountability: enforcing compliance

The lack of trustworthy promises and credible commitment makes the suffering of children on battlefields look like an endless and hopeless tragedy—but it need not be. We know what needs to be done; in fact, the international community has agreed to it several times over. What is lacking is a 'commitment to act, and the resources to go with it'.³⁸

Action is crucial because 'words on paper' do not save those in danger. It is urgent to shift energies 'from the juridical project of elaborating norms to the political project of ensuring their application and respect on the ground'. This objective would be reached 'if the international community was prepared to employ its considerable collective influence to that end'.³⁹

Holding perpetrators of war-time crimes against children accountable and punishing them in a systematic and just manner will be both curative and preventive: it will contribute to the alleviation of the current suffering of children in armed conflicts and it will spare emerging generations the same fate, thus ultimately fulfilling the great promise enshrined in the United Nations Charter—the very *raison d'être* of the Organization—to *save succeeding generations from the scourge of war*.

One of the main conclusions of the Special Session on Children (May 2002) was that the promotion of the well-being of children remains an 'unfinished agenda' and, as a matter of consequence, there must be 'further progress in the coming decade to complete the unfinished agenda of the [1990] Summit for Children and to tackle some emerging issues that imperil the well-being of children in the twenty-first century'.⁴⁰ A first-order priority could be monitoring and enforcing compliance with legal norms aimed at the protection of children in armed conflicts.

A first-order priority could be monitoring and enforcing compliance with legal norms aimed at the protection of children in armed conflicts.

As previously noted, the legal basis for such action is already in place. In addition to the sources of international law defined in the Statute of the International Court of Justice (article 38), Security Council resolutions as well as certain resolutions of a specific nature of the United Nations General Assembly are legally binding upon Member States.⁴¹ Additionally, article 38 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to this Convention, article 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court, article 24 of the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in

Time of War, as well as many other legal regimes strongly condemn the brutalization and the killing of children on battlefields. Under certain circumstances, even declaratory statements like those made at diplomatic gatherings can become legally binding, since the results of such meetings 'may constitute cogent evidence of the state of the customary law on the subject concerned'.⁴² Taken together, this is a powerful legal arsenal that only needs to be applied—to hold accountable and bring to justice those terrorizing innocents.

More precisely, the 1999 Security Council resolution on children strongly condemns the victimization of children in armed conflict and 'calls upon all parties concerned to comply strictly with their obligations under international law, in particular the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the obligations applicable to them under the Additional Protocols thereto of 1977 and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989'. Significantly, the Council, in a clear and uncompromising way 'stresses the responsibility of all States to bring an end to impunity and their obligation to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949'.

In resolution 1379 of 20 November 2001, the Security Council again urged '... Member States to put an end to impunity, prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children and exclude, where feasible, these crimes from amnesty provisions and relevant legislation, and ensure that post-conflict truth-and-reconciliation processes address serious abuses involving children'.

Protecting children from conflict: practical steps

Given the nature of both the international community and international law, experience shows that one of the most efficient ways to make international law work is to endow treaties with a *robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism*, which would work as a force multiplier for appropriate implementation of commonly agreed norms.⁴³ International law protecting child rights still has to draw all the consequences from this important lesson. As recognized a few years ago by the Special

Experience shows that one of the most efficient ways to make international law work is to endow treaties with a robust monitoring and enforcement mechanism, which would work as a force multiplier for appropriate implementation of commonly agreed norms.

Representative for Children and Armed Conflict, perhaps 'the most important single challenge in addressing the plight of children in armed conflict' remains 'how to translate international instruments and local values into practice on the ground'.⁴⁴

For the last few years, a series of agendas for the protection of children in armed conflicts has been elaborated both by governmental and non-governmental institutions. Among others, there are UNICEF's 'Anti-War Agenda',⁴⁵ the United Nations Secretary-General's 'Ten Recommendations',⁴⁶ and Graça Machel's recent 'agenda for peace and security'.⁴⁷ One can also mention important contributions from other institutions like the OSCE⁴⁸ and the ICRC.⁴⁹ However, as long as compliance with legal norms is not made effective, most of these agendas will continue to be just what they are now: simple words on paper. This is not to say that defining agendas and plans of action is unimportant. As mentioned by Ambassador Patricia Durrant (of Jamaica), Chairperson of the Preparatory Committee for the Special Session on Children, 'setting goals is a crucial step' towards effective action: 'with goals, we have something to strive for. Without them, we have no way of measuring our success and failures'.⁵⁰

Here are four concrete, realistic and easily implemented steps (supposing there is good will and genuine good faith) aimed at monitoring and enforcing compliance with legal norms and basic moral principles.

Step 1: Ostracize rogue fighters and pariah stakeholders. In circumstances of armed conflict and with respect to the objective of unconditional protection of children, a 'rogue fighter' or a 'pariah stakeholder' should be defined as anyone (group or individual) who victimizes children in violation of internationally accepted legal or moral norms. Such culprits must be ostracized from peace negotiations as well as post-conflict power-sharing. Indeed, a fundamental frustration in some post-war situations is to see former users of child combatants sharing power in governments of national reconciliation and parading as ministers or even heads of state, while the children they transformed into human rags are abandoned, hopeless and helpless in moral and material misery.⁵¹

Culprits must be ostracized from peace negotiations as well as post-conflict power-sharing.

Step 2: Promote punitive justice and individual responsibility. Most of the conflicts in which children are currently brutalized and killed are internal or civil wars. Until the end of the Second World War and the Nuremberg Trials, 'the international agreements governing the laws of war applied only to armed conflicts between states and had no formal bearing on non-international armed conflicts'.⁵² In terms of accountability of crimes committed on battlefields, this meant that non-state actors, notably insurgent groups and individuals, could not be directly held accountable for crimes they committed during hostilities. Fortunately, this is no longer the case.

A major evolution in international law makes it easier to punish non-state actors found guilty of abusing the rights of the child. Particularly, the last half-century has witnessed 'the development of the law [of armed conflicts] from a legal regime principally dealing with armed conflicts between states to one also dealing directly with internal armed conflict'.⁵³ A major innovation in the process is that criminals can now be held individually accountable for their war crimes. Today, 'there are acts or omissions for which international law imposes criminal responsibility on individuals and for which punishment may be imposed, either by properly empowered international tribunals or by national courts and military tribunals'.⁵⁴ Wherever and whenever 'the laws of war are applicable in a particular armed conflict, they are binding not only upon states as such but also upon individuals, and, in particular, the individual members of armed forces'. Besides, 'individual responsibility relates not only to the commission of crime, but also ordering, inducing, or facilitating it'.⁵⁵ Accordingly, article 6 of the Charter of the International Military Tribunal annexed to the Agreement for the Prosecution and Punishment of the Major War Criminals of the European Axis (August 8, 1945) mentioned that war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace are considered as crimes 'for which there shall be individual responsibility'. The International Military Tribunal emphasized that 'crimes against international law are committed by men, not by abstract entities, and only by punishing individuals who commit such crimes can the provisions of international law be enforced'.⁵⁶

In the current international environment, the responsibility of individuals under international law has become a legal, self-evident truth, as shown by the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia (established in 1993) or the International Tribunal for Rwanda (established in 1994): the statutes of these tribunals contain articles addressing 'individual criminal responsibility'.⁵⁷ More precisely for the case in point, article 4 of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict condemns 'with the gravest concern the recruitment, training and use within and across national borders of children in hostilities by armed groups distinct from the armed forces of a State' and recognizes in its Preamble 'the responsibility of those who recruit, train and use children in this regard'. Article 8 of the Statute of the International Criminal Court classifies as a war crime 'conscripting or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities'.

Step 3: Make the crimes imprescriptible. One way to adequately punish crimes against children in armed conflicts would be to put such crimes in the category of the gravest breaches of moral and legal order in our societies, and make them not subject to prescription.

'Prescription' is legally defined as 'the effect of the lapse of time in creating and destroying rights'. In civil and criminal laws, 'liberative prescription' is 'a bar to a lawsuit resulting from its untimely filing'.⁵⁸ According to certain legal systems (the French one for instance), a crime is legally imprescriptible when it cannot be subject to extinction or amnesty by claims founded on prescription. In this case, whatever and no matter how long it takes, the accused, as long as he/she is still alive, is absolutely and unconditionally bound to face justice.⁵⁹

In international law, at least three broad types of crimes are generally considered to be imprescriptible: crimes of war, crimes against humanity and crimes against peace. An additional category, increasingly mentioned in international tribunals prosecuting war criminals is crimes related to 'massive human rights tragedies'.⁶⁰ It is obvious that crimes against children in fighting fields fall in these categories. Security Council resolution 1379 recommends that crimes against children on battlefields be excluded, 'where feasible ... from amnesty provisions'.

Step 4: Harmonize national legislation. Security Council resolution 1261 (1999) 'stresses the responsibility of all States to bring an end to impunity and their obligation to prosecute those responsible for grave breaches of the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949'.⁶¹ This means that 'the prime [but not exclusive] responsibility for the prosecution of violations rests with national authorities of the state within which the violations occurred'. Accordingly, it is necessary that governments harmonize their respective national legislation. Article 4 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child therefore urges States Parties to 'undertake all appropriate legislative, administrative, and other measures for the implementation of the rights recognized in the present Convention'.

Acting firmly and 'talking tough'

The recent history of efforts aimed at protecting children in armed conflict shows that conciliatory discourses and good intentions are not enough. Actions must speak as loud as words. However words, when used, must be compatible with circumstances. Given the context, 'tough talk' is essential. As shown by the experience in Sierra Leone or Sri Lanka (among others), those killing and brutalizing

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children on battlefields are not innocents themselves. They are especially savage and rough individuals with whom it is vital to deal with in an unequivocal manner if one is to be listened to and understood. A clear and strong message must be sent to actual and potential child victimizers that the world will no longer remain immobilized when faced with gross violation of children's rights in times of armed violence. Strong and meaningful indications have to be sent—and followed up with action when necessary—that there be no justification of the deliberate brutalization or

killing of a child on the battlefield. As repeatedly mentioned by the United Nations Secretary-General, the victimization of children in armed conflict must cease to be considered as something 'merely regrettable'. It is absolutely imperative we ensure that 'it is recognized as intolerable' and 'those who practice this form of child abuse must be held accountable'.⁶²

Notes

1. *Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, United Nations document A/55/163-S/2000/712 of 19 July 2000, para. 2.
2. See for instance Ahlström Christer, 1991, *Casualties for Conflict: Report for the World Campaign for the Protection of Victims of War*, Uppsala, Uppsala University (Department of Peace and Conflict Research). In her report on children and war, Graça Machel notes, 'throughout history, war has exacted a horrific toll on children. But modern warfare kills, maims and exploits children more callously and more systematically than ever before'. Graça Machel, 2001, *The Impact of War on Children*, London, Hurst and Company, p. 1.
3. The author thanks those of his colleagues and friends who drew his attention on this contradiction in the United Nations rhetoric on children and armed conflicts.
4. For a deeper discussion on this topic, see for instance René-Jean Dupuy, 1986, *La communauté internationale entre le mythe et l'histoire*, Paris, Economica/UNESCO; Philippe Moreau Defarges, 2000, *La communauté internationale*, Paris, Presse Universitaire de France (coll. 'Que sais-je ?').
5. See < <http://www.unicef.org/mission.htm> > .
6. United Nations General Assembly resolution 3318(XXIX).
7. See the report of Graça Machel, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, document A/51/306 of 26 August 1996, at < <http://www.unicef.org/graca/> > . On 20 February 1997, Ambassador Olara Otunnu was appointed the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict.
8. See *World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children*, New York, 30 September 1990, at < <http://www.unicef.org/wsc/declare.htm> > .
9. *Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s*, at < <http://www.unicef.org/wsc/plan.htm> > .
10. UNICEF, 1992, *State of the World's Children*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 2 and 5.
11. *UNICEF Newline*, 'Plight of child war victims takes centre stage', 27 August 1999, at < <http://www.unicef.org/newline/99pr34.htm> > .
12. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. xi.
13. *We the Children: End-decade review of the follow-up to the World Summit for Children. Report of the Secretary General*, document A/S-27/3 of 4 May 2001, para. 16, at < <http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/documentation/documents/a-s-27-3e.pdf> > .
14. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *ibid.*, para. 44.
15. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *ibid.*, para. 33.
16. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *ibid.*, para. 26.
17. UNICEF, 2001, *The State of the World's Children 2002*, New York, UNICEF, pp. 9 and 11.
18. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*, para. 33.
19. See *World Declaration ...*, 1990, *op. cit.*, para. 24–25, at < <http://www.unicef.org/wsc/declare.htm> > .
20. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*, para. 244.
21. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*, para. 28.
22. UNICEF, 1999, 'Measures of Humanity', in *The State of the World's Children 2000*, New York, UNICEF, p. 51.
23. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*, para. 27.
24. A compilation of data from various United Nations and NGOs reports, as well as Machel, 2001, *op. cit.* and Mario Bettati, 2000, *Droit humanitaire*, Paris, Seuil.
25. See Anatole Ayissi and Robin-Edward Poulton (eds.), 2001, *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, New York/Geneva, United Nations; concerning the same phenomenon in Liberia, see for instance Stephen Ellis, 2001, *The Mask of Anarchy*, New York, New York University Press.
26. Janet Fleischman (ed.), 1994, *Easy Prey: Child Soldiers in Liberia*, New York, Human Rights Watch/Africa, pp. 2–3; Douglas H. Johnson, 1989, 'The Structuring of a Legacy: Military Slavery in Northeast Africa', *Ethnohistory*, vol. 36, no. 1 (Winter), pp. 72–88; Human Rights Watch, 1994, *The Lost Boys: Child Soldiers and Unaccompanied Boys in Southern Sudan*, New York, Human Rights Watch; Comité Français de l'UNICEF, 1996, *Les enfants et la guerre - 1996*, Paris, p. 12; UNICEF, *La situation des enfants dans le monde*, 1996, New York, UNICEF, p. 18. On RENAMO using and abusing children in Mozambique, see for instance William Finnegan, 1992, *A Complicated War: The Harrowing of Mozambique*, Los Angeles, University of California Press; or see Enny Panizzo, 1996, 'Les enfants dans la guerre, le cas du Mozambique', *Afrique contemporaine*, special issue on ' L'Afrique face aux conflits ', n° 180 (October-December), pp. 142–59.
27. N. Boothby, A. Sultan and P. Upton, 1991, *Children of Mozambique, the Cost of Survival*, Oxford, Oxford University Press. See also Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Consideration of Reports Submitted by States Parties Under Article 44 Of The Convention - Initial Report of States Parties due in 1996: Mozambique*, UNHCHR document n° CRC/C/41/Add.11 of 14 May 2001.

28. *UNICEF Newslines*, 'UNICEF calls for release of child soldiers by LRA', 5 March 2002, at < <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/02pr06lra.htm> > .
29. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
30. See European Union, 'Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): Children in the Frontline', *The Courier APC-EU*, March-April 2002, at < http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/publicat/courier/courier191/en/en_016_ni.pdf > .
31. *UNICEF Newslines*, 'Sri Lankan Children in Crisis', 20 July 2001, at < <http://www.unicef.org/newsline/01pr61.htm> > .
32. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
33. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 9.
34. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 6.
35. *Plan of Action ...*, 1990, *op. cit.*, para. 3 and 36. Available at < <http://www.unicef.org/wsc/plan.htm> > .
36. On objective assessment and concrete practical recommendations, see for instance: *Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General*, 2000, *op. cit.*; *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*; *Protection of children affected by armed conflict: Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict*, United Nations document A/55/442 of 3 October 2000; Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*; and UNICEF, 1996, *The State of the World Children 1996*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, pp. 12–41.
37. Kofi Annan in UNICEF, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
38. Dr Gro Harlem Brundtland, address to the WHO/UNICEF Global Consultation on Child and Adolescent Health and Development, Stockholm, 12 March 2002.
39. Comments from Olara Otunnu before the Security Council, on 25 August 1999. *Security Council Strongly Condemns Targeting of Children In Situations of Armed Conflict, Including their Recruitment and Use as Soldiers*, United Nations Press Release SC/6716 of 25 August 1999, at < <http://www0.un.org/News/Press/docs/1999/19990825.sc6716.html> > .
40. *We the Children ...*, 2001, *op. cit.*, para. 17.
41. On the sources of international law, see for instance Malcolm N. Shaw, 2001, *International Law*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (4th edition), pp. 54–98.
42. Ian Brownlie, 1999, *Principles of Public International Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press (5th edition), p. 14.
43. On this topic, see for instance John D. Steinbruner, 2000, *Principles of Global Security*, Washington, DC, Brookings Institution Press.
44. *Translating International Instruments into Practice Key in Addressing the Plight of Children in Armed Conflict*, United Nations Press Release GA/SHC/3479 of 20 October 1998.
45. UNICEF, 1996, 'Anti-War Agenda', in UNICEF, 1996, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41.
46. The recommendations are taken from the report of Graça Machel, *Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, document A/51/306 of 26 August 1996, available at < <http://www.unicef.org/graca/> > .
47. Machel, 2001, *op. cit.*, ch. 15, pp. 173–186.
48. OSCE, 2000, *OSCE Human Dimension Seminar on Children and Armed Conflict, Consolidated Summary*, Warsaw, 23–26 May, at < <http://www.osce.org/odhr/documents/reports/hds/m00-2-children-consum.pdf> > .
49. See for instance ICRC, *Legal protection of children in armed conflict*, at < <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList74/E4ED13CE168BC9C2C1256B66005F4FFB> > .
50. Quoted in *Has World Lived Up to Its Promises to Children? UN Member States Meet to Review Past Promises and to Set New Goals for Children*, United Nations Press Release ICEF/1857 PI/14192 of 2 May 2002, at < <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/icef1857.doc.htm> > .
51. Due to lack of resources or vision, post-war reintegration programmes are unable to take in charge, in an appropriate manner, all of these children.
52. Adam Roberts and Richard Guelff, 2000, *Documents on the Laws of War*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 22. See also Hans-Peter Gasser, 1983, 'Internationalized Non-International Armed Conflicts: Case Study of Afghanistan, Kampuchea and Lebanon', *American University Law Review*, vol. 33, no. 1 (Fall), pp. 145–61.
53. Roberts and Guelff, 2000, *op. cit.*
54. Brownlie, 1999, *op. cit.*, p. 565.
55. Roberts and Guelff, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
56. As quoted in J. Steiner and Philip Alston, 2000, *International Human Rights in Context*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 1134.
57. Roberts and Guelff, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 21.
58. Bryan A. Garner (ed.), 1999, *Black's Law Dictionary*, Minnesota, West Group (7th edition).
59. On these issues, see for instance Steiner and Alston, 2000, *op. cit.*
60. *Ibid.*
61. Security Council resolution S/RES/1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999.
62. Words spoken by the United Nations Secretary-General to the Security Council on 7 May 2002. See 'Use of Child Combatants Will Carry Consequences', *Secretary-General Tells Event on Child Soldiers*, United Nations Press Release SG/SM/8226 of 7 May 2002, available at < <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2002/sgsm8226.doc.htm> > .

Child soldiers, displacement and human security

Lisa ALFREDSON

Children who are separated or displaced from their families or communities are, as particularly vulnerable or marginalized populations, among those at greatest risk of recruitment by armed forces and armed groups.¹ At the same time, the most vulnerable and marginalized segments of society, a category which includes child soldiers, are also most at risk of becoming 'displaced'—as refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) or asylum seekers.² This leaves thousands of children around the world doubly at risk of recruitment and displacement, and sometimes trapped in a vicious circle between the two. Yet the connections between displacement and the use of children as soldiers have remained poorly understood, seriously impeding efforts to address affected children's needs.³

This paper briefly introduces the practice of using children as soldiers and the phenomenon of displacement within the context of human security. It then explores some of the links between child soldiering and displacement. International law and standards for protecting children in these situations is described, followed by some concrete recommendations.

A human security challenge

A 'child soldier' may be defined as 'any person under 18 years of age who is a member of or attached to the armed forces or an armed group, whether or not there is an armed conflict'.⁴ The age limitation of this definition is based upon the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child—the most widely ratified convention in existence—which defines a 'child' as any person under the age of 18 (art. 1).

Research has shown that children need not necessarily be 'combatants' to be perceived as members of or attached to armed forces or groups. They may perform a variety of other tasks, both military and non-military, including: scouting, spying, sabotage, training, drill and other preparations; acting as decoys, couriers, guards, porters, sexual slaves; as well as carrying out various domestic tasks and forced labour.⁵ While some children volunteer for recruitment, many others are conscripted or forcibly recruited and may be serving against their will. Additionally, 'the lines between compulsory, voluntary and forced recruitment are often blurred. Children may be subjected to various political and economic

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pressures that provide them with little alternative than to “voluntarily” join armed forces or armed groups’.⁶ Nevertheless, their association with armed forces or groups—even if forced—puts them at serious risk of attack by perceived enemy groups, whilst the tasks they are often asked to perform are a danger to their physical and psychological well-being. Consequences for the child soldier are well documented and can include death, disability, drug addiction, serious psychological trauma, social alienation or inability to reintegrate after the conflict, pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS, homelessness, etc.

Global attention in recent years has been focused on gaining a better understanding of the situation of child soldiers. International legislation and standards have been moving toward the prohibition of the use of any persons under the age of 18 as soldiers⁷—evidence that the Rights of the Child are increasingly accepted as of paramount importance in all societies. They are the basic foundation for present and future human security—a concept which prioritizes the well-being of humans rather than states.

While some might argue that preserving a military defence system, even if it requires the use of recruits under the age of 18, is crucial for maintaining national or ethnic security, it is nevertheless clear that the effects of armed conflict on children are devastating, not only for children themselves but for their societies. The concept of human security developed precisely ‘as a counterpoint to the idea of *national security*...’, as Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Oscar Arias explains. ‘Slowly but surely, progressive thinkers in the security and development communities got together and began promoting the notion of human security: the idea that fortified borders, armed conflicts and ideological domination do not necessarily lead to security. Security was recast as a concept that should be applied to individuals instead of states...’.⁸

With more than 300,000 children (a conservative estimate) participating in hostilities in more than thirty countries today, and half a million serving in the armed forces or armed groups of at least eighty-five countries,⁹ the consequences for human security are cast into sharp relief. The use of children as soldiers is, in many countries, an integral part of the war machine. Children fought in most of the thirty-seven conflicts occurring around the world in 2001.¹⁰ During protracted armed conflicts they are often recruited as the number of available adults dwindles, thus enabling the conflict to continue.¹¹ Some countries have extremely large populations of under-18s and relatively low life expectancy for the population as a whole, adding to reliance on under-18s in armed forces and groups.¹² Many developed countries have been doing away with conscription, but find it increasingly difficult to maintain the necessary number of recruits, thus leading to a reduction in the voluntary recruitment age or a failure to raise the minimum recruitment age to 18.¹³

Displacement, which often occurs on a mass scale during situations of armed conflict, also affects children (like others) in a way that threatens the stability and future of society. The term displacement has generally lacked a good working definition and consistent usage; in this paper it is used broadly to refer to several populations: refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers, and in some cases separated children.¹⁴ This usage refers to all persons compelled to leave their homes due to persecution, a situation of disruption or armed conflict, and who are prevented from returning to their homes at their own will.

The UNHCR estimates that there are some 22 million displaced children in the world. Many are displaced for years on end. For example, children in the worst affected areas tend to remain internally displaced for an average of six to seven years, during which time they often lack access to adequate (or any) education, nutrition, and social stability.¹⁵ Refugees, asylum seekers and separated children often face a similar lack of access to basic resources, sometimes exacerbated by discrimination that they face as marginalized populations.¹⁶

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But what exactly are the relationships between displacement and the practice of child soldiering? What are the consequences, and how might they be ameliorated or prevented?

Displacement and child soldiering

Displacement and child recruitment are not merely parallel or unrelated offshoots of war; they are often deeply inter-related. In fact, whether during war or peace, there appears to be a strong correlation between risk of recruitment *during* displacement, as well as risk of displacement as an *outcome* of recruitment.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the most serious risk arises in countries in the midst of protracted or intense armed conflict, where the numbers of both IDPs and child soldiers often soar. Even a cursory look reveals that countries experiencing the worst trends in child recruitment (both in numbers and often brutality of treatment)¹⁷ during recent armed conflicts have also tended to produce the largest populations of IDPs and/or refugees in the world, including literally millions of children. This includes countries such as Sierra Leone, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Sudan, Burundi, Somalia, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Colombia and Iraq.¹⁸

A vicious circle

Displacement may occur before, during or after a child is recruited, and at any stage of armed conflict. Recruitment may affect all types of displaced children—refugees, asylum seekers, the internally displaced, and those separated from their families or caregivers. These categories are far from mutually exclusive; children often become trapped in a cycle of vulnerability to both recruitment and displacement. Bearing this in mind, we can identify at least four basic connections between child soldiering and displacement.

Children often become trapped in a cycle of vulnerability to both recruitment and displacement.

- First, beginning with the most commonly recognized connection, *former child soldiers are vulnerable to displacement.*
- Second, an increasingly recognized connection, *displaced children are vulnerable to military recruitment and re-recruitment.*
- Third, *children are displaced or relocated to prevent recruitment.*
- And fourth, perhaps the most controversial of the categories, *child soldiers are displaced as soldiers (as a general characteristic of their condition).*

FORMER CHILD SOLDIERS ARE VULNERABLE TO DISPLACEMENT

Child soldiers who escape, are captured or demobilized too often find they cannot simply return to their families and communities—and instead become IDPs, refugees or asylum seekers.

The difficulty in many cases of tracing or actually reuniting former child soldiers with family or community members is well known.¹⁹ Basic instability and endemic lack of infrastructure in conflict areas can prevent children from being physically transported back to their communities. The regional

or cross-border character of some conflicts can make reunification even more difficult, requiring greater resources, communication and cooperation across vast territories and between humanitarian agencies and governments.

Even in circumstances where children can be returned, they often have no place to return to. Family members may have been displaced themselves or even killed. Tragically, some families and communities may reject former child soldiers due to crimes committed while in service, perceived alliances with enemies, or social consequences arising from disability, psycho-social difficulties, pregnancy, HIV/AIDS and other possible effects of military service.²⁰

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In some cases family members may be located in conflict areas or areas controlled by armed elements, making it too dangerous for former child soldiers to return. Former soldiers are at particular risk of re-recruitment as well as reprisals (against themselves or their families), not only by the same armed force or group that may have recruited them to begin with, but by opposing groups as well.

The risk of displacement in all these situations may be exacerbated for children who escape or run away before being formally demobilized. Formal demobilization (when available) at least offers the potential for resources, protection and programmes to aid with family reunification—although even then the difficulties of demobilization, particularly for children, are many.²¹ However, some countries such as Colombia, have taken the opposite tactic; there, national legislation obliges demobilized child soldiers to live temporarily in institutions set up by the government, typically in large cities far from the children's families, regardless of their situation.²² When children are not reintegrated into their family or community, they may remain in transit or rehabilitation centres for months and ultimately have no place to go once released. Sometimes the rate of population displacement in conflict areas can make some families nearly impossible to locate from one month to the next.²³ When this happens, unless former child soldiers remain in institutional settings, they are at risk of becoming street children, being re-recruited, or persecuted for desertion or for crimes committed by armed forces or groups they once served. While it is generally agreed that long-term institutionalization should be a last resort,²⁴ the necessary amount of time needed between demobilization and family reunification is not clear at all, and indeed may be apparent only on a case by case basis—something that resource-scarce programmes may not be able to afford.

Other child soldiers may escape or be relocated to refugee camps already overburdened and unable to cope with the needs of inhabitants. Aid workers may have difficulty grappling with the unique needs of former child soldiers—often separated from their families, rejected or persecuted by members of the community, at risk of joining a 'military element' in refugee camps, or being targeted by armed elements outside the camps.²⁵

Internally displaced former child soldiers may face the greatest risk because they may still be at the mercy of the people who caused them to be uprooted, while international aid agencies may be unable to access or even identify them.²⁶ Unlike refugees, they suffer from lack of a single, comprehensive and binding international legal framework of protection specifically for IDPs.²⁷ Instead, their rights are protected through a patchwork of various broader treaties. Legal responsibility falls primarily upon the government of the state where displacement occurs, places in which the legal protections or the infrastructure to implement them may be absent or destroyed by war.²⁸

Some former child soldiers may seek asylum in a foreign country to escape the dangers of armed conflict, including recruitment/re-recruitment, punishment for desertion or persecution for crimes committed by the armed force or group they served. Those whose refugee claims are heard on an individual rather than group basis, particularly in south-north refugee movement, explicitly encounter the controversy over children's accountability for crimes committed while serving in armed forces or

groups—whether they are criminals or victims deserving of refugee status.²⁹ This movement also forces refugee-receiving countries far from the site of conflicts to grapple with the issue of accountability—something they may wish to avoid.³⁰ The number of children in this situation is unknown, but an increasing number of cases are coming to light.

Displacement of former child soldiers also occurs in non-conflict zones, although in different ways. Some professional armies in peaceful countries have high rates of ‘absent without leave’ (AWOL) soldiers who are under 18, a proportion of whom become homeless.³¹ And in most countries, governments take no responsibility for the reintegration of former recruits into society once they are discharged. Post-traumatic stress syndrome is believed to present serious challenges to successful reintegration, and can arise from even relatively short exposure to conflict situations in foreign countries.³² While such situations may point toward a broader definition of displacement than commonly used, it can be argued that at least the situation of children under the age of 18 warrants a rethinking of what actually constitutes displacement (discussed below). This could include, for example, the situation of ‘separated’ or ‘unaccompanied’ children, including street children. These children lack family or community structures to support them when, due to their age, they remain dependent on adult care and are thus particularly vulnerable.

DISPLACED CHILDREN ARE VULNERABLE TO MILITARY RECRUITMENT AND RE-RECRUITMENT

Both inside and outside refugee and resettlement camps, displaced children are vulnerable to recruitment and re-recruitment. It is well recognized that unaccompanied or separated children, such as those within settlement camps, in the street, and other children not typically thought of as ‘displaced’, are at particular risk.³³

IDPs and refugees in camps are sometimes militarized or targeted by armed forces or groups seeking recruits—even across national borders. Former child soldiers also face the danger of separation or internment with armed elements within camps and settlements, which increases risk of re-recruitment not to mention the dangers of such associations.³⁴ Slow registration processes at camps can result in recruitment that is never documented at all, as IDPs and refugees disappear without record.³⁵ These situations have been documented in numerous cases, to the extent that UNHCR mandated special protection from recruitment for displaced populations in its Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children (1994) and Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998). Yet protection remains difficult, both due to lack of resources and inadequate awareness of the risks and necessary steps for prevention. Cross-border recruitment among refugees far from their homeland (for example, the PKK, a Turkish insurgent group, recruited Kurdish children in Sweden, Germany and France) presents even greater logistical challenges.³⁶

Due to the general disruption caused by armed conflict, IDPs and refugees typically also lack mechanisms for protection from recruitment that would traditionally be present within their communities, including viable alternatives to recruitment such as education and employment. Food scarcity, high levels of insecurity, and sometimes even a sense of family or national/ethnic/other honour may compel children to join armed forces or groups where otherwise their communities might have discouraged or prevented recruitment. For unaccompanied children, recruitment may appear to be the sole means of ensuring food, shelter or protection. Many children join or are recruited after witnessing brutality against their own families or communities, in hope of seeking revenge or out of a sense of ideological right.³⁷

Food scarcity, high levels of insecurity, and sometimes even a sense of family or national/ethnic/other honour may compel children to join armed forces or groups where otherwise their communities might have discouraged or prevented recruitment.

CHILDREN MAY BE DISPLACED OR RELOCATED TO PREVENT RECRUITMENT

The phenomenon of purposeful displacement or relocation to evade recruitment is mostly known among wealthier populations. This occurred extensively during the conflicts in Lebanon and South Africa, for example.³⁸ But it also occurs in many non-conflict countries on a regular basis. This is evidenced by the fact that, in many countries, the armed forces are comprised predominantly of less educated, poorer and minority populations, often from rural areas, while wealthier or more advantaged groups can evade conscription by attending university, paying bribes, or moving abroad or to other parts of the country.³⁹

However, purposeful displacement does occur among poorer populations as well, and with potentially graver consequences. Under-18s may be unaccompanied and forced to travel in hostile regions through means that wealthier children might be able to avoid.

Sometimes whole families move because armed forces or groups extort money or food from those that do not 'contribute' a child for recruitment.

Whole families are sometimes displaced to protect a child or because the loss of a child to recruitment would bring its own economic consequences (e.g. loss of labour). Sometimes whole families move because armed forces or groups extort money or food from those that do not 'contribute' a child for recruitment.⁴⁰ In such situations entire families might risk grave danger as they move through unstable regions and become displaced.

CHILD SOLDIERS ARE DISPLACED AS SOLDIERS (AS A GENERAL CHARACTERISTIC OF THEIR CONDITION)

Almost all children under the age of 18 who enlist, are conscripted or forced to serve in armed forces or armed groups become 'separated' children—removed from their families and/or home environment (only a small number serve with family members or have been born in a military camp). They are also typically displaced from their communities and normal way of life, to live in military camps and militarized environments. They are physically relocated, often at great distances from their homes and often to dangerous zones. Not only are they not free to return to their family or community at will (or lack the knowledge or support for their right to do so where legislation on conscientious objection to military service exists), they also often lack the means to return without facing serious dangers, or because their families or communities have also been displaced. They are essentially in a state of displacement and as such are even more at the mercy of the armed forces or groups that have recruited them.

Unfortunately, the commonly accepted concept of displacement has not encompassed children in these situations, even those forcibly recruited, abducted or pressured to 'volunteer' against their will. As a result, a huge population of displaced children has 'fallen through the cracks', perhaps in support of the view that militaries have the right to recruit and use children as soldiers—a view increasingly falling out of fashion.

However, it is becoming clear that adults or children who are recruited, whether forcibly or voluntarily, fit the displaced definition in so far as they are *compelled* to leave their homes and/or are *prevented* from returning at their own will, particularly during conflict situations. Additionally, because of their age, children are particularly disadvantaged; they can be more easily persuaded or threatened into joining, and humiliated or terrified to prevent them from leaving or escaping. Their greater dependence on families and communities to support and protect their development and well-being creates a situation in which the effects of recruitment may be very much like the effects of displacement on children generally—often resulting in lack of traditional protection from abuse, absence of necessary

learning and health systems, and often involving an uncertain status in relation to the government or other armed groups. In many armed forces and groups young recruits (in both conflict and non-conflict areas) are subject to harsh or even brutal treatment, including hazing practices that can result in death. Before all else they become subject to the military hierarchy, formal and informal, and whether monitored or corrupt. Most militaries even have their own internal court and penal systems, which can be unduly harsh, particularly for growing children.

We therefore need to ask whether age should be taken into account in the definition of displacement. In this respect, some people might be most easily persuaded to recognize child recruits as 'displaced' in conflict zones, particularly those at extremely young ages (9, 10, 11 years old) recruited by non-governmental groups or by government forces considered corrupt or noncompliant with international human rights standards. But the internationally accepted definition of 'the child' is not context dependent, and includes *all* children under the age of 18. Thus older children in regular armed forces must be recognized as well—for example 16 and 17 year old recruits in the United Kingdom, who are categorically denied the choice of opting-out of the military contract after a certain amount of time has elapsed, and thus prohibited from returning to live with their families or communities. What are the consequences of recruitment for these under-18s? How does it affect their development, health and psycho-social well-being, not to mention the physical risks faced during training and deployment?

The internationally accepted definition of 'the child' is not context dependent, and includes all children under the age of 18.

The likely resistance to recognizing all child soldiers as essentially displaced could stem in part from the long-standing tendency for double standards—being lenient about child recruitment in some contexts (e.g. government forces of Western countries that recruit 16 and 17 year olds) while taking the high moral ground on child recruitment in others (e.g. non-Western countries and particularly non-state armed groups). It could also stem from a continuing unwillingness of many governments to give up all child recruits, or the lack of capacity for aid agencies to take on another tremendous population in extremely sensitive situations. However, international legislation and standards are making such stances increasingly difficult to uphold.

Rights

There is a significant and growing body of international law and standards that can be drawn upon to prevent both child recruitment and its potential links to displacement. Briefly, the most directly applicable include the following.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child entitles all children under the age of 18 to the right to personal security generally. Its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict lays out specific standards and protections against the recruitment and use as soldiers of children under the age of 18 (art. 3) and to ensure their demobilization and rehabilitation (art. 6 and 7).⁴¹ But threats to children's security are often aggravated by lack of protection by their own government, their lack of personal identity documentation and the disruption of traditional family, clan and community structures. Threats may come from a variety of agents—including armed forces or groups, political factions, police and border guards.

Not only do displaced children have the same rights to protection and assistance as all children, they are entitled to the same general protections and rights as other displaced persons and civilians through the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols. Regarding vulnerability to recruitment, they also enjoy protection through standard setting international guidelines. In 1989 the UNHCR Executive Committee adopted Conclusion No. 59(XL), which drew special attention to the

particular need to ensure refugee children's right to protection from military recruitment. The UNHCR Guidelines on the Protection and Care of Refugee Children (1991) subsequently advocated that 'no refugee, neither adult, nor adolescent nor child, be conscripted', stating that '[F]orcing refugees to be soldiers violates the principle that refugees are a neutral population in an asylum country.'⁴² Children in particular have special right to protection, as the Guidelines explain: 'once a refugee voluntarily takes up arms or otherwise takes direct part in hostilities, (s)he can no longer enjoy UNHCR's protection. However, children who may be constrained to take up arms, even if they do so voluntarily, may as minors not be considered as responsible for their own actions.' The Guidelines specify that former combatants of any age who lay down their arms and otherwise meet the definition of a refugee are eligible for protection.⁴³

The United Nation's Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (1998) similarly provide international standards (although non-binding) on protection against child recruitment. This includes Principle 13, which states: '(1) In no circumstances shall displaced children be recruited nor be required or permitted to take part in hostilities. (2) Internally displaced persons shall be protected against discriminatory practices of recruitment into any armed forces or groups as a result of their displacement. In particular any cruel, inhuman or degrading practices that compel compliance or punish non-compliance with recruitment are prohibited in all circumstances.'

To put these rights into effect they need to be widely acknowledged and properly implemented by the wide range of actors and institutions that deal with children in armed conflict situations and with displaced persons.

Recommendations

Because displacement and child soldiering are so integrally related, measures to ameliorate one situation often improve the other. But governments, inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations must also specifically target the links between child soldiering and displacement through more holistic and integrated approaches.

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While there is a great deal of work being done on the ground for children in a variety of situations, monitoring, access to information and dissemination of best practices is typically difficult in conflict zones and where the situation fluctuates rapidly.

International standards need to be developed and applied to recognize the various circumstances, dangers, needs and capacities of different types of displaced children (refugees, IDPs, asylum seekers and separated children) and child soldiers (whether boys or girls, combatants or non-combatants, etc.), and at different points of intervention (prevention, response, monitoring). The following recommendations are a compilation of many suggested by UNHCR and others working in the field, and should be appropriately applied to protect all displaced children and child soldiers.⁴⁴

- Governments should ratify and implement the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, and enforce the standards it sets regarding minimum recruitment age, demobilization and reintegration.
- Armed groups should express their compliance with the Optional Protocol and enforce the standards it sets regarding minimum recruitment age, demobilization and reintegration.
- Governments should ensure universal birth registration in order to prevent recruitment of under-18s by default.

- Governments and aid organizations should work to create viable alternatives to recruitment, such as education and employment.
- Governments and aid organizations should strengthen security or staff presence where children are at risk of recruitment (i.e. escape routes, reception centres, camps or settlements) to facilitate preventative actions and to ensure rapid response.
- Governments, local governments and aid organizations should monitor and investigate or report to appropriate authorities cases of child recruitment or suspected recruitment (e.g. unexplained extended absences from school), as well as the presence of former child combatants, both in the general population and among displaced populations.
- Governments and aid organizations should prioritize protection of unaccompanied or separated children, for example organizing special accommodation or safeguards for such children and others at particular risk of recruitment.
- Governments and aid organizations should locate camps and settlements at a safe distance from the border of the country of origin or conflict area in order to minimize risk of military recruitment, and should relocate those camps at risk.
- Governments and aid organizations should ensure speedy registration procedures at camps and settlements, as well as at demobilization centres.
- Governments and aid organizations should prioritize the immediate psychological, social and physical rehabilitation of former child soldiers generally and to prevent re-recruitment.
- Governments should ensure appropriate standards of juvenile justice, and aid organizations should ensure former child soldiers are not penalized by being denied access to aid.
- Governments and aid organizations should make every effort to trace and reunite former child soldiers with their families, using long-term institutional care only as a last resort.
- Governments and aid organizations should prepare families and communities for the return of their children, helping them to cope emotionally and to respond to former child soldiers' needs, including protection from re-recruitment.
- Governments, aid organizations and international bodies such as the United Nations Security Council should condemn child recruitment and inform the public and both political and military leaders of the need to protect all children from recruitment, and to demobilize and reintegrate those recruited.
- Governments and aid organizations should promote and facilitate family and community awareness and capacities to prevent child recruitment.
- United Nations agency staff, NGO personnel, government officers and security personnel should be trained to protect children from recruitment in conflict situations.
- Governments and international bodies should work to end impunity for those who recruit children.

Conclusion

The multitude of connections between displacement and child soldiering, both threats to human security in themselves, demonstrate the tremendous challenges facing us as we try to assist these marginalized populations. The first step toward addressing their needs is simply to be aware of these connections in order to make use of existing mechanisms for rights and protections in the most holistic manner possible—thereby stopping the cycle from continuing.

In this respect, the dearth of research into the causes and consequences of child recruitment in developed countries and in peace time is one major disadvantage to our understanding of the negative consequences of child soldiering generally, its links to displacement in particular, and its broader consequences for society and human security.

There are many arguments against the use of children as soldiers, to which we should also add the following: that whether 'volunteers', conscripts or forced recruits, in conflict or non-conflict zones, regardless of the country's level of development or compliance with international standards, child soldiers are essentially displaced. Displacement for these children means increased insecurity and lack of access to choice, resources and opportunities. As child soldiers, who can not simply 'go home', it means risk of death, disability and serious psychological trauma. For their communities and societies, restoring human security and building the future will be that much harder.

Notes

1. Graça Machel, 1996, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, New York, United Nations; Rachel Brett and Margaret McCallin, 1998, *Children—the Invisible Soldiers*, Stockholm, Save the Children (Sweden); Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *Child Soldiers Global Report 2001*, London, Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers.
2. Save the Children (UK), 2000, *War Brought Us Here: Protecting Children Displaced within Their Own Countries*, London, Save the Children.
3. One of the only articles to directly discuss this link is Rachel Brett, 2002, 'The connection between flight and child soldiers', *Refugees* (UNHCR), vol. 1, no. 122.
4. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 417.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 417; also see Machel, 1996, *op. cit.*; Brett and McCallin, *op. cit.*
6. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
7. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict prohibits: the use of under-18s in hostilities, recruitment of under-18s by non-state armed groups, conscription of under-18s and voluntary recruitment of under-16s by state forces, and urges states to raise the voluntary recruitment age to 18. ILO Convention 182 prohibits forced or compulsory recruitment of children under 18. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child prohibits the recruitment of children under the age of 18 by states.
8. Oscar Arias, 2002, 'Special Comment', *Disarmament Forum* (UNIDIR), issue 2, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research.
9. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.* Numbers of child soldiers are notoriously difficult to estimate, in part due to difficulties in access and monitoring, but also because the situation on the ground may fluctuate rapidly; children may be soldiers today, killed or displaced tomorrow, or may reach the age of 18 while they serve.
10. In 2001 there were thirty-seven armed conflicts in thirty countries, slightly down from forty conflicts in thirty-five countries in 2000. See Ploughshares, 'The 2002 Armed Conflicts Report', *Ploughshares Monitor* (Ontario), Spring 2002, at < <http://www.ploughshares.ca/content/MONITOR/monm02e.html>>.
11. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
12. For example in Sierra Leone, where the use of children as soldiers was previously one of the highest in the world, the average life expectancy was only 38.3 (United Nations Development Programme, 2001, *Human Development Report 2001*, New York, UNDP) and children under the age of 18 made up approximately 50% of the population. See also UNICEF, 2001, *The State of the World's Children 2000*, Oxford/New York, Oxford University Press.
13. In the United Kingdom, for example, the government has admitted that its recruitment campaigns actively target 16 and 17 year olds due to the shortage of recruits and difficulty of recruiting adults. See the United Kingdom report in Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
14. *Refugees* are persons outside their native lands who are unwilling to return due to well-founded fear of persecution on account of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees). The 1969 Organization of African Unity Convention and the 1984 Cartagena Declaration extended this definition to include persons who flee from war and other events that seriously disrupt public order. *Internally Displaced Persons* are those who have been forced or obliged to flee

- or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights, or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border (United Nations Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, 1998). *Asylum seekers* are persons who are 'seeking' legal status as refugees. The term is often used to describe those seeking refugee status in a 'third country of asylum'. *Separated* or unaccompanied children are those without their family or extended family, usually in situations outside their communities.
15. Save the Children (UK), 2000, *op. cit.*
 16. Although all are entitled to rights under various national and international laws (see Rights section of this paper), implementation of or access to tools necessary to enjoy these rights are often lacking for these vulnerable groups.
 17. Based on review of country reports in Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
 18. With a low of 175,000 internally displaced children alone in Somalia and a high of one million in Sierra Leone and two million in Sudan. See UNHCR, *Refugees by Numbers*, 2001 edition, available at < <http://www.unhcr.org>> ; Save the Children (UK), 2000, *op. cit.*
 19. For example see Isobel McConnan and Sarah Uppard, 2001, *Children—Not Soldiers: Guidelines for working with child soldiers and children associated with fighting forces*, London, Save the Children, chapter 9.
 20. Jean-Claude Legrand, 1999, *Lessons Learned from UNICEF Field Programmes For the Prevention of Recruitment, Demobilization and Reintegration of Child Soldiers*, UNICEF (mimeo.).
 21. For example see McConnan and Uppard, 2001, *op. cit.*, chapters 8 and 9.
 22. Information provided by the Colombian Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, May 2002.
 23. In Colombia in 2000/2001, up to one-fifth of ex-combatant children who were in care were not able to return to their families. See McConnan and Uppard, 2001, *op. cit.*, p. 166.
 24. Michael G. Wessells and Carlinda Monteiro, no date, *Healing, mobilization, and social integration: community-based assistance for war-affected Angolan children*, Randolph-Macon College and Christian Children's Fund, Christian Children's Fund/Angola (mimeo.).
 25. UNHCR, 1994, *Refugee Children: Guidelines on Protection and Care*, Geneva, UNHCR.
 26. Children who participate in demobilization and rehabilitation programmes are often described as 'separated' rather than displaced, but in essence their situations are extremely similar.
 27. The United Nations appointed a Special Representative on Internal Displacement, and adopted Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement, but these guidelines are not binding.
 28. Although numerous NGOs work in the field to meet the needs of IDPs, they are not under any legal obligation to do so.
 29. While the number of children in this situation may be far fewer compared to the other categories, it has been less recognized or documented to date, and may currently be on the rise. See Michael Gallagher, 2001, 'Soldier Boy Bad: Child Soldiers, Culture and Bars to Asylum', *International Journal of Refugee Law*, vol. 13, no. 3.
 30. International legal standards are evolving; most recently, the Rome Statute for the International Criminal Court made the recruitment of children under the age of 15 a punishable offence. An important precedent was also established with the creation of a special criminal court in Sierra Leone, which determined that those most responsible for crimes should be prosecuted (typically referring to those in command, not regular soldiers), and that juveniles should be dealt with by a separate truth and reconciliation commission.
 31. See the United Kingdom report in Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
 32. For example see Barry Donnan, 1999, *Fighting Back*, London, Mainstream Publishing.
 33. Machel, 1996, *op. cit.*
 34. See UNHCR, 1994, *op. cit.*
 35. Legrand, 1999, *op. cit.*
 36. See report on Turkey in Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
 37. Causes of child recruitment generally are described in detail by Machel, 1996, *op. cit.*; Brett and McCallin, 1998, *op. cit.*; Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
 38. Brett, 2002, *op. cit.*
 39. *Ibid.* Such situations are also documented in Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2001, *op. cit.*
 40. *Ibid.*
 41. See endnote 7.
 42. UNHCR, 1994, *op. cit.*, p. 85.
 43. *Ibid.*, pp. 85–86.
 44. Many recommendations can be found in UNHCR, 1994, *op. cit.*

Juvenile justice, counter-terrorism and children

Rachel BRETT

Since 1979, the United Nations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have successfully documented and raised the level of international concern about the recruitment and use of children¹ in armed conflict.² The entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on involvement of children in armed conflict³ and of other international and regional standards, such as the International Labour Organization's Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No. 182), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the Rome Statute for an International Criminal Court, raise hopes that substantial changes on the ground will follow. However, some aspects of the problem of child participation in armed conflict, internal strife or situations of militarized violence remain little explored and even less well understood.

In the past few years the subject of juvenile justice and child soldiers has received greater attention. In particular, the move to establish a Special Court for Sierra Leone led to considerable discussion about how to treat the many children who had been active participants in that conflict and had killed and committed other atrocities in the course of it.⁴ The debate focussed on two issues:

- should juveniles,⁵ between the ages of 15 and 18, be tried in the Special Court; and
- how should the experience of children be brought in to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The events of 11 September 2001 and their consequences have resulted near worldwide attention on and support for counter-terrorism mechanisms. The current focus on 'the war against terrorism', and the demands for action against terrorism by the United Nations Security Council, have encouraged this trend. Armed opposition groups often include children or are claimed to do so. Are the Security Council's Counter Terrorism Committee, national governments and concerned organizations considering the legitimacy and impact of the counter-terrorism legislation and actions reported to it on such children?

The situation in Sierra Leone highlighted the need for more serious consideration of how child participants in armed conflict, internal violence and other militarized situations are treated by the justice system. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has taken a first step towards increasing our understanding of this issue. In its guidelines for states parties' initial reports on the implementation of the Optional Protocol on involvement of children in armed conflict, the Committee requests information on 'the criminal liability of children for crimes they may have committed during their stay with armed forces or groups and the judicial procedure applicable, as well as safeguards to ensure that the rights of the child are respected.'⁶

When thinking about juvenile justice issues, we need to examine the treatment of children and juveniles in four fundamentally different contexts:

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- children legally recruited into government armed forces;
- child participants in armed internal or international armed conflicts;
- children who surrender, are demobilized or captured during an armed conflict; and
- children caught up in what is (or may be designated by those who oppose them) as ‘terrorism’.

CHILDREN IN GOVERNMENT ARMED FORCES

Despite efforts to prohibit *all* military recruitment of children, thousands of under-18s continue to be recruited legally into government armed forces. These recruits/young soldiers are subject to a

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military legal system, punishment and discipline whose compatibility with the international standards and norms on juvenile justice should be examined. This situation is relatively straightforward. The problem is in essence a conceptual one: the need to recognize that the age of these young soldiers remains a relevant consideration despite their membership in the armed forces. Issues include the nature of trial procedures, the safeguards applicable because they are juveniles, the nature of punishment, including in some instances (in particular in wartime) the possible application of the death penalty. Stark examples of this have been the death sentences imposed by the Court of Military Order on 16- and 17-year-old soldiers in the government forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.⁷ Less clear is whether the military justice systems in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, which continues to recruit thousands of under-18s each year, provide adequate safeguards for the protection of juveniles. In 2000, the Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that:

States parties review all provisions of criminal legislation, including on criminal procedure, dealing with children under 18 (including any special legislation applying to armed forces) so as to ensure that it reflects appropriately the provisions of the Convention on the Right of the Child (arts. 37 and 40) ... [and] consider incorporating into all relevant domestic laws and regulations ... the provisions of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (“The Beijing Rules”, adopted by General Assembly resolution 40/33 of 29 November 1985), of the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (the Riyadh Guidelines, adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/112 of 14 December 1990), of the United Nations Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty (adopted by General Assembly resolution 45/113 of 14 December 1990), and of the Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System (the Vienna Guidelines, annexed to ECOSOC resolution 1997/30 of 21 July 1997).⁸

In some countries children are educated in military schools or academies, in which they are also under military jurisdiction. Some of the schools are from the age of 15 (as in Japan); others may be for even younger children, but this is a subject about which little is known. The compatibility of these regimes to the juvenile justice standards and norms should be reviewed.⁹

It is important to continue to bear in mind the situation of children and juveniles in government armed forces—both those recruited lawfully and those incorporated illegally under domestic or international law—when considering the situation of children and juveniles in internal or international armed conflicts and post-conflict situations.

CHILD PARTICIPANTS IN INTERNAL OR INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS

The fundamental question here is whether child soldiers and child participants in an armed conflict should be tried for war crimes and other acts. This is the situation facing Sierra Leone. If they are to be tried, what form of trial and what form of punishment should be applied to them? If trials are not considered appropriate, for whatever reason, what accountability mechanisms or means should be used to enable children (and their families and communities) to come to terms with, and take responsibility for, what they have done?

It may be important to distinguish between the different ways in which children have participated, for example in government armed forces, in armed opposition groups, in paramilitaries, militias or other groups. These distinctions may not be relevant, but depending on the nature of the conflict and the way it ends, they could be important. The situation is likely to be very different in relation to an international armed conflict than an internal one. However, it remains essential to look at general rules or principles to be clear whether the same rules should apply or whether distinctions in the type of conflict are integral to the rules. For example, some of the debate around the question of juveniles and the Sierra Leone Special Court seemed to suggest that no soldier who was under 18 at the time of the commission of the offence should ever be tried. In a situation where national reconciliation after a civil war is seen as the primary objective, this might be a defensible position (although the issue of impunity should also be considered). However, if a British teenage soldier commits a war crime in another country as part of an international armed conflict, do the same rules apply as at the end of an internal armed conflict such as Sierra Leone?

In addition to the questions of principle, there are the practical problems of how functional the judicial system, and in particular the juvenile justice system, is in the post-conflict situation. Such a system may not have existed prior to the conflict and considerable investment may be required to build or rebuild a functioning, effective juvenile justice system compatible with the relevant international standards. The Sierra Leone situation helped to draw international attention to this problem. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights resolution 2002/47, on 'Human rights in the administration of justice, in particular juvenile justice', devotes a number of paragraphs to encouragement and support of rebuilding and strengthening the administration of justice (including juvenile justice), with special attention to post-conflict situations.

CHILDREN WHO SURRENDER, ARE DEMOBILIZED OR CAPTURED DURING AN ARMED CONFLICT OR UNSETTLED SITUATION

The treatment of children who surrender, are demobilized or captured during an armed conflict is an extremely delicate and problematic issue. The distinction as to whether the child is in government armed forces, in a government-aligned group or in an armed opposition group may be crucial in terms of the legal situation (as well as the *de facto* one). The idea of trying to demobilize soldiers during an armed conflict is unique to the issue of child soldiers as demobilization normally occurs once a conflict has ended. However, the international or domestic reaction to the use of children sometimes reaches a point at which governments or armed groups feel obliged to respond. While recognizing the urgent imperative of removing children from fighting forces, the demobilization of child soldiers while a conflict is ongoing can have unintended consequences. Once demobilized, a former child soldier can easily be re-recruited or forced to participate in the continuing violence.

While recognizing the urgent imperative of removing children from fighting forces, the demobilization of child soldiers while a conflict is ongoing can have unintended consequences.

In an international armed conflict, children in government armed forces who are captured or surrender are entitled to be treated as prisoners of war under the provisions of international humanitarian law, even if they are below the 15 year minimum lawful age for recruitment and participation in hostilities.

The problem is much more complex in non-international armed conflicts. In practice, too often children are simply killed by their captors—whether government or opposition forces. Summary executions are a problem in many regions and children as young as 8 have been amongst the victims.¹⁰

If not killed, children may be detained, tortured or ill treated, interrogated, held in military barracks, and/or incorporated into the fighting force that captured them.¹¹ The latter is a particular hazard for child, as opposed to adult, soldiers. This reflects the vulnerability of children to exploitation in this fashion through: threats, pressure, persuasion or role-modelling; their normalization into violence and their self-identity as soldiers; and in many instances their participation in the conflict as a survival strategy rather than for ideological or other reasons.¹²

The issue of juvenile justice as such (that is, in law) only arises when the children are in the hands of the government. Unfortunately, the abuses listed above are not exclusive to non-governmental armed groups. In Colombia, specific concerns have been raised about the fact that ‘comprehensive care for children who have previously taken part in hostilities is still unavailable. Minors who surrender and those who are captured are treated differently: while those who surrender may benefit under State welfare programmes, those who are captured face criminal penalties.’¹³

Furthermore, detentions by the military are not exclusive to national forces. In addition to the abuses alleged to have been perpetrated by ECOMOG forces in Sierra Leone, KFOR ‘military holds’ (i.e. arrests and detentions) in Kosovo have included juveniles perceived as a ‘threat to KFOR’, with no guaranteed right of access to defence counsel.¹⁴ When KFOR began its operation, neither the civilian police system nor the courts functioned. The result was that arrested suspects were detained and held, and then ‘released when the security forces felt inclined to do so’.¹⁵ In fact, their mandate was unclear as to whether they had the power to detain or to try persons accused of crimes.

If international forces are to have the power to detain, it should be clearly spelled out on what basis, for how long, and so on, and should be subject to safeguards.

If international forces are to have the power to detain, it should be clearly spelled out on what basis, for how long, and so on, and should be subject to safeguards. The normal safeguard is some form of judicial involvement. If this is not available within the country, then it needs to be imported with the international force itself. The specific questions in relation to juveniles also need to be considered: in particular, the age of criminal responsibility to be applied (since there is no universal standard age) and the additional safeguards and processes to be used. When available, the domestic law would be an obvious source for these, if it is acceptable to the parties on the ground and is compatible with international standards.

CHILDREN AND TERRORISM

Until recently, the international debate on terrorism had tended to focus on distinguishing between ‘freedom fighters’, ‘legitimate resisters’ and ‘terrorists’. However, the reactions of states and of the United Nations Security Council to the events of 11 September 2001 have given a new urgency to this issue. In addition to the political and semantic debate, there has been much legal and human rights concern expressed about the use of force, unlawful killings, military tribunals, indefinite detention without trial, restrictions on those seeking asylum, discrimination against those of Arab, Asian or Islamic

appearance and so on. While these concerns are not arising for the first time, the 'war on terrorism' has both exacerbated and given apparent legitimacy to these trends.

In the midst of the rush to enact counter-terrorism legislation, little if any consideration has been given to the fact that some of the suspected or alleged 'terrorists' could be children or juveniles under the age of 18. Where some children participate, other children from the same region, ethnic group, or with other similar defining characteristics also tend to come under suspicion.

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The child soldier research done for the United Nations Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (The Machel Report) of 1996 noted: 'It so happens that in many instances under-age suspects never do reach [the] courts and are often nothing more than the usual daily news headlines on [government] television: "Troops have killed so many terrorists today".'¹⁶

Around the world, children are fighting in many of the armed groups engaged in internal armed conflicts or internal strife.¹⁷ Some governments have long dubbed such opponents as 'terrorists'—sometimes with justification, sometimes not. Governments are notoriously reluctant to accept that they are involved in an internal armed conflict, preferring to declare a state of emergency or to claim that they are engaged in police action against terrorism. The current climate has encouraged governments in this tendency.

The increasing recognition of the involvement of children in armed groups has not yet leapt the conceptual boundary that if governments—with or without international support—designate these groups as 'terrorist', inevitably some children will also become 'terrorist' suspects.

Actions that raise concern or condemnation about the way terrorist suspects are treated in general need to be considered in relation to the particular impact they may have on child suspects. For example, arresting suspects late at night, detaining them for months and at a distance from their families or in circumstances in which family visits are very difficult, interrogation in order to secure confessions, ill-treatment and even torture, and trials under military justice systems have more or different impacts on children because of their age, dependence on family, greater vulnerability to intimidation by adults, the different concept of time, etc.

Children detained as terrorist suspects confront several additional dangers. In many countries, there are no military courts or judges designated especially for children, no officers trained specifically for their interrogation, no probation officers and no social workers to accompany them. When there is not a separate facility for juveniles, they are imprisoned with adults and are vulnerable to assault by other inmates as well as guards. These problems have been highlighted in relation to Palestinian children who are charged with throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Such children face a maximum penalty of 6 months' imprisonment for a child between 12 and 14, and 12 months' imprisonment for a child between 14 and 16.¹⁸

A well-documented earlier case is that of Peru. The Report of the United Nations Working Group on Arbitrary Detention on its mission to Peru¹⁹ details the progressive steps taken by the then-government in the judicial field in its efforts to combat the activities of the Shining Path and MRTA. These included lowering the age of criminal responsibility, allowing military courts to try civilians, extending the scope of legislation so that even those *forced* to join or provide assistance to the 'terrorists' could be convicted under the anti-terrorism laws, weakening the presumption of innocence and the rules on evidence, and extending the scope of the crime of treason (for which the death penalty could be applied). The Working Group took note of the fact that juveniles were falling within the anti-terrorism laws and that some of the 'innocent prisoners'—convicted under laws that had subsequently been repealed and yet were still in prison—were juveniles.

More recently, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions found some cases in Turkey of high school students (aged 14, 15, and two 17-year olds) reportedly abducted and killed by JITEM, the intelligence and anti-terror unit of the gendarmerie, or shot by the police in the course of unarmed demonstrations, while distributing a political newsletter, or during incommunicado detention in a police station.²⁰

In March 2002, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers reported that: "The application of justice and security measures to child soldiers and other children in conflict zones has emerged as a critical protection issue. The Coalition's recent workshop in India highlighted the ways children are subjected to national security or "anti-terrorist" legislation and emergency measures, resulting in "disappearances", arbitrary detention, torture and even summary killings."²¹

Conclusion

The issues examined in this article raise two fundamental concerns: that the agreed international standards on how children and juveniles should be treated are too little known and even less implemented; and that where 'exceptional legal regimes'—whether called anti- or counter-terrorist, state or national security or emergency laws—are introduced, the question of whether these should be applicable to children and, if so, how they relate to the international standards, is given little or no attention.

The identification of the complex set of issues relating to juvenile justice, child soldiers and counter-terrorism received a boost at the 2002 United Nations Commission on Human Rights. In addition to the specific references given above,²² the Report of the High Commissioner for Human Rights pointed out that:

Persons under 18 years of age enjoy the full range of rights provided in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. This Convention, which has been ratified by almost every state in the world, does not allow for derogation from rights. As article 38 clearly states, the Convention is applicable in emergency situations. All the rights of the child embodied in the Convention must be protected even in times of emergency. Particularly significant is the recognition that every child has the inherent right to life. This includes the prohibition against imposing death sentences for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age, which should not be disregarded at any time. The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (The Beijing Rules) are also relevant.²³

The Commission resolution 2002/47 on 'Administration of Justice, in particular juvenile justice',²⁴ which was adopted without a vote, contained a number of clear and specific provisions²⁵ relevant to this area, including reiterating that the Secretary-General's in-depth study on the issue of violence against children should consider children who are affected by national security, state security, counter-terrorism and similar laws; and that states should review their national legislation to ensure that any such laws under which children or juveniles could be tried are compatible with the provisions of international law. The resolution also emphasized the necessity of ensuring the effective implementation of relevant international standards relating to juvenile justice; and urged states to ensure that neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release are imposed for offences committed by persons below 18 years of age.

In relation to international forces, the solution proposed by Françoise Hampson,²⁶ United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights expert, is the development of ‘packages’ or model provisions that could be inserted into United Nations mandates as and when needed. One package could include authority to detain, powers of search and seizure, grounds for detention, minimum age of criminal responsibility, and so on. For example, no ‘administration of justice package’ would be needed in situations with a functioning court system. In others, the package could include a ‘mechanism that is overseen by some form of judicial officer, so that the detention can be authorized or confirmed’. She points out that in Somalia, the Australians used local people applying the Somali Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, but that another approach would be needed if the local law was not acceptable (for example because it is discriminatory and/or incompatible with international standards).

Military trials have been the subject of a study by another expert of the United Nations Sub-Commission, Louis Joinet.²⁷ He concludes that civilians should not be tried by a military tribunal, and recommends that military tribunals not have the competence to judge anyone under the age of 18.

The attention given to these issues at the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission is welcome. Even better would be the universal implementation of the provisions of these recommendations and the international standards relating to the rights of the child and juvenile justice on which they are based. The first step, however, needs to be recognition that the concept underpinning why under-18s need special protection when they come into conflict with the law does not become invalid merely because they are members of the armed forces or because additional or exceptional legal powers apply. The reasons why children and juveniles are recognized as needing and deserving different treatment remain applicable—so should the requisite standards, even if this challenges long-held assumptions.

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Notes

1. The term ‘children’ is used to cover all persons under the age of 18, in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and ILO Convention 182.
2. See, for example, the United Nations Study on the Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (The Machel Study), and its five-year review, the reports of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, studies by UNICEF, the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, various Save the Children organizations, as well as G. Goodwin-Gill and I. Cohn, 1994, *Child Soldiers*, Oxford, Oxford University Press; R. Brett and M. McCallin, 1996, *Children: The Invisible Soldiers*, Stockholm, Radda Barnen (2nd ed. 1998).
3. 12 February 2002.
4. See, for example, Amnesty International, 2000, *Child Soldiers—Criminals or Victims?*, December; AI-index IOR 50/002/2000, <<http://web.amnesty.org/802568F7005C4453/0/988CA1EDF887FF40802569CA00421760?Open>>.
5. Criminal justice systems tend to make a distinction between the older ‘juveniles’ and younger ‘children’. In the interests of clarity and consistency, this distinction is maintained in this article.
6. Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Guidelines regarding initial reports to be submitted by States Parties under Article 8(1) of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict*, CRC/OP/AC/1 of 14 November 2001, article 6, para. 3(f).
7. See, for example, the Commission on Human Rights, *Extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions: Report of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Asma Jahangir, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/45*, E/CN.4/2002/74 of 9 January 2002, para. 108.
8. Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Report on the twenty-fifth session*, CRC/C/100 of 14 November 2000, p. 131.

9. There may also be questions about the nature of the education received. The whole subject of children in military schools is one ripe for research.
10. An 8-year old boy caught in possession of a pistol was allegedly killed by ECOMOG soldiers in Sierra Leone. Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1999/1: Situation of human rights in Sierra Leone*, E/CN.4/2000/31 of 22 December 1999.
11. See, for example, Human Rights Watch, *Rwanda: Observing the Rules of War?*, vol. 13, no. 8(A), December 2001, at <<http://www.hwr.org/reports/2001/rwanda2/>>.
12. See Brett and McCallin, *op. cit.*
13. Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights on the human rights situation in Colombia*, E/CN.4/2001/15 of 8 February 2001, para. 79. The response of the Government of Colombia, dated 21 March 2001, is contained in document E/CN.4/2001/139.
14. Commission on Human Rights, *Situation of human rights in the former Yugoslavia: Report of Mr. Jiri Dienstbier, Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the situation of human rights in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Croatia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia*, E/CN.4/2000/39 of 28 December 1999.
15. See the Commission on Human Rights, Working Paper of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, *Administration of Justice: The accountability of armed forces, United Nations civilian police, international civil servants and experts taking part in peace support operations*, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2001/WP.1 of 13 August 2001.
16. Quotation from Brett and McCallin, *op. cit.*, citing one of the case studies for the Child Soldier Research Project.
17. See the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Global Report on Child Soldiers 2001*, at <http://www.child-soldiers.org/report2001/global_report_contents.html>.
18. Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights, Mr. John Dugard, on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967*, E/CN.4/2002/32 of 6 March 2002, section XII. The response of the Government of Israel, dated 28 March 2002, is contained in document E/CN.4/2002/159.
19. Commission on Human Rights, *Civil and Political Rights, including questions of: torture and detention, Report of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, Addendum, Report of the mission to Peru*, E/CN.4/1999/63/Add.2 of 11 January 1999.
20. Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the Special Rapporteur, Ms. Asma Jahangir, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 2001/45, Addendum, Mission to Turkey*, E/CN.4/2002/74/Add.1 of 18 December 2001. The response of the Government of Turkey, dated 16 April 2002, is contained in document E/CN.4/2002/177.
21. Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2002, Editorial, *Child soldiers newsletter*, issue 3 (March), <<http://library.amnesty.it/cs/childsoldiers.nsf/c01485f116ed11e880256b20004bbd8a/9ca132295e19c57d80256b7e002f240e?OpenDocument>>.
22. Commission on Human Rights, *Written statement submitted by Friends World Committee for Consultation (Quakers)*, E/CN.4/2002/NGO/18 of 24 January 2002 also focused on these juvenile justice issues.
23. Commission on Human Rights, *Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and Follow-up to the World Conference on Human Rights*, E/CN.4/2002/18 of 27 February 2002.
24. E/CN.4/2002/L.11/Add.4, p. 67.
25. These built upon the Committee on the Rights of the Child's recommendation 'that States parties review emergency and/or national security legislation to ensure that it provides appropriate safeguards to protect the rights of children and prevent violence against them, and that it is not used inappropriately to target children (for example, as threats to public order or in response to children living or working on the streets)'. See Committee on the Rights of the Child, *Report on the twenty-fifth session*, CRC/C/100 of 14 November 2000, para. 10, p. 131.
26. Commission on Human Rights, *Working Paper of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights, op. cit.*
27. Commission on Human Rights, *Issue of the administration of justice through military tribunals: report submitted by Mr. Louis Joinet pursuant to Sub-Commission decision 2001/103*, E/CN.4/Sub.2/2002/4 of 9 July 2002.

The impact of conflict on children—the role of small arms

Julia FREEDSON

My name is Wilmot, from Liberia. I am 16 years old. At age five, I fled from Liberia with my mother to Sierra Leone. I was too young at the time to really understand what was happening. I heard the sounds of guns. I saw people running. I saw people shooting. I saw people being killed. I saw people dying. People as young as I were dying ... I saw families like mine, in the thousands, leave everything behind and run ... The children of Liberia appeal to the Security Council of the United Nations to do everything possible to stop the fighting in Liberia.¹

Wilmot Wungko, a Liberian child caught in the crossfire of conflict in his country, spoke on behalf of millions of children around the world who are harmed by wars not of their making. Addressing the United Nations Security Council in a special meeting on children and armed conflict in May 2002, he explicitly described the impact of guns, violence and displacement on children and articulated the need for greater support for children of war. During the last decade more than two million children have been killed and more than six million permanently disabled or seriously injured in armed conflict.² Some estimates put civilian casualties of war as high as 80–90%—a large portion are women and children killed by small arms.³

This paper examines the impact of armed conflict on children, with a focus on the role of small arms. It also discusses protections afforded to children in situations of armed conflict and the new initiative by non-governmental organizations (NGOs)—the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict—to improve monitoring and reporting on violations against children. Finally, this article calls for improved cooperation across sectors to prioritize the protection of children's rights and security in specific situations of armed conflict.

Children, including adolescents, are the most vulnerable populations in situations of armed conflict. Many are forced from their homes, injured and even killed. Because of war, entire generations of children grow up without ever seeing the inside of a schoolroom, and without receiving proper nutrition or vaccinations. Other children are recruited to be combatants and become witnesses to and forced perpetrators of extreme violence. Children, particularly girls, face increased threats from trafficking, exploitation and gender-based violence. These can result in serious health problems, including the spread of HIV/AIDS. Landmines are also a particular threat to children; more than 50% of landmine victims are children.⁴ These and other physical consequences are compounded by the emotional and psychological traumas of war.

Julia Freedson is the Coordinator of the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict. The Watchlist is an NGO initiative to improve monitoring, reporting and follow-up action to protect the rights and security of children in specific armed conflicts. It urges the United Nations Security Council, United Nations agencies and relevant governments to protect children before, during and after armed conflict. More information about the Watchlist and country reports are available at < <http://www.watchlist.org> > or < <http://www.crin.org/watchlist> > .

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons in war perpetuates these devastating impacts on children's lives and contributes to the lack of protection for children before, during and after armed conflict. Because small arms are light and can be simple to handle, young children can operate and repair them with little training. As a result, these arms facilitate the use and targeting of children in war, contributing to the environment where children become victims of human rights violations, forced displacement, psychosocial trauma and other serious abuses to which they are particularly vulnerable.⁵ The suffering caused by small arms and light weapons is immeasurable. Carol Bellamy, the Executive Director of UNICEF, articulated the impact of these weapons this way: 'More than tanks, missiles and mortars, light weapons have terrorized children during wars and after ... they have probably extinguished more young lives than they have ever protected.'⁶

Children and armed conflict: the international agenda

Because they are among the most vulnerable during times of war, children are given special protections under international law. The Geneva Conventions and its Additional Protocols explicitly provide protection for children in times of war. The Geneva Convention IV (1949) states that the child has the right to protection from all violence to life and to person (art. 3a). This was also the first international document to deal with children's participation in hostilities. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which entered into force in 1990, is applicable at all times and contains some articles specifically designed to protect child victims of war. The CRC's Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict, which prohibits the use of children as combatants, entered into force in February 2002. A number of other international documents also provide protections for children during times of war.

In practice, however, children are often the most neglected by the international community, national governments, aid agencies and others who should be doing their utmost to protect them. In

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regard to the impact of small arms on children during armed conflict, regional initiatives have been among the first to address the issue and build on the growing awareness of the problem. For example, several regional groups have passed political declarations on the use of child soldiers that refer specifically to the damaging consequences of the trade in small arms on children.⁷ Yet implementation of such declarations is still uncertain and much work remains to be done.

The Security Council has said that the protection of children affected by armed conflict is essential for the promotion and maintenance of international peace and security. The Security Council has repeatedly made commitments for the protection of children in armed conflicts. But little has been done to turn these commitments into real protection on the ground. Graça Machel, one of the world's most dedicated advocates for war-affected children, recently warned, 'The implementation of the measures promoted in General Assembly and Security Council resolutions is slow at best, and the improvements we have been pushing for are still only intermittently and dimly reflected in the everyday lives of children.'⁸

The international community first began a coordinated effort to confront the complexities of the relationship between war and children with Graça Machel's groundbreaking 1996 study entitled *The Impact of War on Children*, which was commissioned by the United Nations. Since 1996 many NGOs, United Nations agencies and governments have recognized the extent and severity of the abuses of children in wars and have advocated for better protection of their rights and security. In September 2000, the First International Conference on War-affected Children highlighted a number of priorities

for action regarding children and armed conflict by all sectors of society. Since then, progress has been made in thematic areas such as education in emergencies, small arms and child soldiers, and in strengthening international standards. Children are now on the peace and security agenda, and a focus for humanitarian action. Security Council resolutions 1261, 1314 and 1379 provide a framework for making the security of children a matter of international peace and security.

Focus on monitoring and reporting

To build on these significant developments, a group of child rights-focused NGOs created the Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict to respond to the need for better monitoring and reporting on the situation of war-affected children, and for early warning and substantial follow-up action during and after armed conflict. The Watchlist urges the international community to protect and improve the lives of children in specific situations of armed conflict by providing policy-makers with data compiled by a network of child advocacy groups and with strategic analysis and practical recommendations for action by the Security Council and others. The Watchlist project encompasses the work of other thematic networks focused on specific areas such as small arms, landmines and child soldiers by incorporating their child-specific information into a comprehensive picture of the lives of children in various war zones. Watchlist reports cover a range of thematic issues impacting children's lives, including health, HIV/AIDS, refugees and internally displaced people, education, trafficking and exploitation, gender-based violence, small arms, landmines and child soldiers.

Operating within the framework of universal human rights principles, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Watchlist partner organizations are creating a mechanism for child rights advocates to work together over the long term. This network will facilitate ongoing advocacy and capacity building within civil society organizations by linking local community groups involved in child protection with international networks to provide consistent follow-up on actions to protect the rights of war-affected children and adolescents. To date, the Watchlist has issued comprehensive reports on Afghan, Burundian and Angolan⁹ children, an update on Afghanistan and a brief statement on the situation in the Middle East. Reports on Palestinian, Israeli, Sudanese and Congolese children are in development.

Watchlist reports expose a range of rights abuses and physical and emotional traumas to children in war zones. In doing so, each report details a variety of factors related to the impact of armed conflict on children. This includes addressing the particular problems related to the use and proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In compiling information about children's lives it has become evident that data on certain thematic areas is more prevalent than in others. This may be due in part to the fact that information about healthcare, education and refugees is more easily quantifiable, while topics such as gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS are associated with taboos and stigmatization making them less openly discussed in some societies.

Information about the direct impact of small arms on children tends to be less detailed and thorough than data on other threats to children during times of armed conflict. There are several reasons why this may be the case. The effect of small arms on children during conflict is very closely tied to the broader impact of armed conflict on children. This can make it extremely difficult to separate the human suffering caused by small arms in the context of war from the general impact of war. Also, there has never been a systematic analysis of the negative impacts of small arms and light weapons on children in conflict situations, which would act as a guide or impetus for information

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collection vis-à-vis small arms in specific war zones. Similarly, few international efforts directly address the linkages between children, small arms and conflict through reporting and monitoring.¹⁰

Watchlist reports have worked to fill the gap in monitoring, reporting and follow-up action by compiling all relevant data related to the impact of conflict on children in a specific war zone, thereby creating a holistic picture of the situation of children. These compilations include data about the impact

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of small arms and are contributing to the debate about the effects of small arms on children by calling attention to the need for more systematic and comprehensive data collection in this thematic area. The shortage of details about the direct impact of small arms and light weapons on children indicates the need for improved coordination and cooperation across sectors at the international, regional and national levels. It should also help to garner support for initiatives that link small arms and threats against children in times of armed conflict with the ultimate goal of improving children's lives.

AFGHANISTAN

Released in October 2001, the Watchlist report on Afghanistan states that at least ten million small arms are in circulation throughout the country, making it the world's leading centre for unaccounted-for weapons (weapons that are not in the hands of intended users or 'legitimate' government actors). Many of the small arms in circulation have been traced back to the war with the Soviet Union and no effort has been made to collect weapons from that era. As a result, these arms continue to circulate inside the country, in Pakistan and throughout the region. Arms flow easily across porous borders, perhaps deepening and prolonging the consequences of conflict and facilitating violence and conflict within the region.

Children in Afghanistan suffer the direct and indirect consequences of this situation. The ready availability of small arms and light weapons facilitates the use of children as combatants and has resulted in the death and maiming of thousands of children whose homes, families and schools were attacked. As in other conflict areas, the presence and use of the weapons left children with broken-down families and communities, limited access to healthcare and education, and vulnerable to trafficking, exploitation, gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and other diseases. However, little concrete information is available about the direct impact of small arms and light weapons proliferation on Afghan children.

The Watchlist report makes specific recommendations for action to the United Nations Security Council to protect the rights and security of Afghan children. These include recommendations directly tied to the impact of small arms, for example:

- Urge all Member States to immediately renew support for local and international mine action groups in their efforts at clearance, disarmament and education; take action to initiate the early destruction of small arms stockpiles.
- End all political, financial and material support to armed forces and groups that are complicit in child rights violations, in particular the recruitment and use of children for military purposes.
- Begin early planning for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of child combatants, including assistance for girls who may have been abducted and forced into marriages, prostitution and other sexual activity.

BURUNDI

Fuelling eight years of war in Burundi, massive amounts of small arms and light weapons have had a devastating humanitarian impact on children and all civilians, including killings, restricted mobility, instability and accidental use. In general, data about the consequences of war on Burundian children is limited, making it particularly difficult to obtain clear, documented information about the weapons' direct effect on youth. As in other conflict areas, the proliferation of these weapons is particularly threatening to children, facilitating their participation in hostilities.

Recommendations for Security Council action on Burundi in regard to small arms include:

- Develop and implement an arms embargo, in keeping with United Nations Security Council resolution 1379 and the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. This would include identifying the sources of arms coming into Burundi and taking effective measures to stop them.
- Command all parties to immediately stop the use of landmines and the stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, as well as urge the Government of Burundi to sign the Mine Ban Treaty.
- Support efforts by UNICEF, the Government of Burundi and other partners to identify, disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former child combatants and encourage donors to allocate resources to this programme so that it can be effective. Efforts to expand DDR programmes should be encouraged to ensure that implementation and outreach touch all areas of the country and include community-based coordination with programmes for other children impacted by war.

ANGOLA

Because of a sustained international presence in Angola during the long-running civil war, more information about the proliferation of small arms and light weapons has been available for Angola than for other conflict areas covered by the Watchlist to date. In Angola, both the government armed forces and the opposition UNITA forces were known to have controlled enormous numbers of small arms and light weapons during the civil war. For years, small arms and light weapons have been trafficked from other countries and made easily available in Angola—although exact numbers have never been identified. AK-47 rifles and other arms were so prevalent during the war that they were reportedly exchanged for radios, meals, cooking oil and other food normally smuggled into Angola by Namibian villagers. In fact, the AK-47 was used as a symbol for UNITA. According to human rights groups in Angola, children fighting for UNITA appeared well-trained in the use of small weapons.

Before the April 2002 cease-fire agreement, both sides spent heavily on weaponry using diamonds and oil to fund their purchases. Just before the agreement, Angola was recognized by groups tracking the proliferation of small arms around the world as an area where illicit drug and mineral trafficking converge with the proliferation of small arms. Embargoes to limit the inflow and use of weapons in Angola met with limited success.

While information about the proliferation of small arms and the impact of armed conflict on children is available, information and analysis of the direct linkages between small arms and children remain largely undocumented. Armed conflict and violence have robbed children in Angola of their most basic rights: life, security, healthcare and education. Small arms have surely exacerbated and prolonged their dire circumstances. However, little attention is paid to this convergence—leading to scant efforts to eradicate the roots of the problem. In the context of the recent cease-fire, the Watchlist report makes the following recommendations to the Security Council:

- Lead an international effort to collect and destroy surplus weapons, in a way that contributes to peace building and community-level reconciliation. High priority should be given to youth-focused programming in reconstruction efforts and to local initiatives to bolster the role of civil society, including children and adolescents, in promoting peace.
- Call on the Government of Angola to allocate a greater percentage of revenues from oil sales to services for children, including food, healthcare and education. This includes improving government transparency and accountability over oil accounts and revenues, as well as public release of the national budget. Also, encourage the United Nations General Assembly to establish an internationally binding certification scheme for rough diamonds that would limit the revenues from diamond sales from perpetuating further conflict, encourage transparency in the management of resources, and promote the direction of resources towards programmes to protect children.
- Call on the lead United Nations agency in Angola, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to facilitate programming for the DDR of child combatants, including special assistance for girls and appropriate counselling, learning and vocational opportunities.
- Urge governmental, United Nations and other donors to support steps towards peace by immediately allocating funds for the establishment of demining programmes and mine awareness programmes, especially targeted at internally displaced women, children and adolescents who are at great risk from landmines as they anticipate returning to their homes.

Protections for children in armed conflict

International law contains both explicit and implicit child protection provisions addressing many of the effects of conflict on children. The following are a few recent examples of international efforts to address violations against children in armed conflict situations and to call for particular protections related to the impact of the use and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

UNITED NATIONS

Security Council resolutions 1261, 1314 and 1379 on children and armed conflict make commitments to address many of the impacts of war on children. This includes specific provisions to focus on the problems that small arms and light weapons inflict on children.

In July 2001, the States participating in the United Nations Conference on Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects agreed on a Programme of Action (A/CONF.192/L.5/rev. 1) to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (section I, para. 21). In the Programme of Action it is stated: '[We the States are] *gravely concerned* about [the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons] devastating consequences on children, many of whom are victims of armed conflict or are forced to become child soldiers ...' (section I, para. 4).

At the national level the States agreed: 'To address the special needs of children affected by armed conflict, in particular the reunification with their family, their reintegration into civil society, and their appropriate rehabilitation' (section I, para. 24). Moreover, the States recognized 'the primary responsibility for solving the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons ... falls on all States' (section III, para. 1). At that time, the States also undertook to cooperate and to ensure coordination, complementarity and synergy in an effort to confront the problem (section III,

Select Security Council resolutions on small arms and light weapons

Resolution 1261 (1999): ‘Paragraph 14) *Recognizes* the deleterious impact of the proliferation of arms, in particular small arms, on the security of civilians ... particularly children, and, in this regard ... stresses the importance of all Member States, and in particular States involved in manufacturing and marketing of weapons, restricting arms transfers which could provoke or prolong armed conflicts or aggravate existing tensions or armed conflicts, and which urges international collaboration in combating illegal arms flows;’

Resolution 1314 (2000): ‘Paragraph 8) *Expresses its grave concern* at the linkages between ... the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and armed conflict, which can prolong armed conflict and intensify its impact on children, and in this regard *expresses* its intention to consider taking appropriate steps, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;’ ‘Paragraph 16(c) [Urges regional and subregional organizations] to undertake initiatives to curb the cross-border activities deleterious to children in times of armed conflict, such as ... the illicit movement of small arms ... ;’

Resolution 1379 (2001): ‘Paragraph 6) *Expresses* its intention to consider taking appropriate steps, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, to address the linkages between armed conflict ... [and] small arms and light weapons, ... which can prolong armed conflict or intensify its impact on civilian populations, including children;’ ‘Paragraph 9(d) [Urges Members States to] consider measures against corporate actors, individuals and entities under their jurisdiction that engage in illicit trade in natural resources and small arms ... ;’ ‘Paragraph 13(c) [Urges regional and sub-regional organizations and arrangements to] take steps leading to the elimination of cross-border activities deleterious to children in times of armed conflict, such as the ... illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.’

para. 2) and agreed to convene a follow-up meeting to gauge progress on global implementation no later than 2006 (section IV, para. 1a).

The United Nations Security Council and Member States have demonstrated commitment to the protection of children during times of armed conflict and to specifically address the negative consequences of the proliferation, illicit trade and use of small arms and light weapons on children. The Security Council and the entire international community must now focus on implementing these promises to protect children. Improved monitoring and reporting is a key first step towards achieving this goal. Watchlist country reports have repeatedly urged the Security Council to advise United Nations agencies to consistently collect, compile and distribute concrete data on the impact of conflict on children—this should include specific studies on the impact of small arms. This information should be made publicly available and should inform all Security Council deliberations on individual conflict areas and encourage programmes and policies to tackle problems wrought by small arms in each conflict area.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

The Watchlist project is a response by NGOs to the need to improve monitoring and reporting on children and armed conflict, including the impact of small arms and light weapons. Recommendations for action in Watchlist reports build on past calls to protect children and aim to address specific threats. By raising awareness about the problems children face in particular conflicts and persistently engaging in follow-up action, the Watchlist project helps to identify problems and to work with relevant parties to implement programmes and policies that protect children. NGO partners can now work together

through this mechanism to recommend practical ways for policy makers to take action to address the broad range of security and rights violations of children during times of war, while also highlighting specific problems, such as the proliferation of small arms.

The first Watchlist reports represent progress towards the ultimate goal of positively impacting the lives of children. By providing information that can make a difference in preventing conflicts, protecting children during conflicts and securing opportunities for children to recover after conflicts, the Watchlist project hopes to guide the Security Council and others on practical actions they can take to turn the international agenda to protect children in armed conflicts into specific actions in specific situations. Additional cooperation between child rights advocates and those working to address the threats of small arms in all sectors would significantly contribute to these efforts. Linkages between the use of small arms and the impact of armed conflict on children are multi-fold—efforts to improve children's lives should also be.

Notes

1. United Nations document S/PV.4528 of 7 May 2002.
2. Graça Machel, 2001, *The Machel Review 1996–2000: A Critical Analysis of Progress Made and Obstacles Encountered in Increasing Protection for War-Affected Children*, Macmillan, p. 5. Also available as United Nations document A/55/749 of 26 January 2001.
3. Rachel Stohl et al., 2001, *Putting Children First: Background Report*, BASIC, International Alert and Saferworld, p. 5, at <<http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubsec/Child1st.pdf>> .
4. International Campaign to Ban Landmines, at <<http://www.icbl.org>> .
5. Stohl et al., *op. cit.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
8. Statement made in an address to the Security Council during its meeting on children and armed conflict, 7 May 2002.
9. The Government of Angola and UNITA signed a cease-fire agreement on 4 April 2002, which offers hope that more attention and resources will be paid to improving the critical situation of Angolan children. The Watchlist report on Angola is to be understood in the context of the decades-long civil war.
10. Stohl et al., *op. cit.*

Education for children during armed conflicts and post-conflict reconstruction

I have seen how one year of school changes a child and how years of school transform that child's future. I have watched as the power of education saved families from being poor, babies from dying and young girls from lives of servitude. And I have lived long enough to see a generation of children, armed with education, lift up a nation.

Graça Machel¹

The right to education is often lost in countries at war. Why, it is asked, should the right to education be a priority in such situations when surely the main concern should be to protect children from violence?

However, conflicts provide no exception to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which elaborates in article 28 the right of the child to education. The Convention recognizes the right of every child to a free primary education, and encourages the development of secondary education that is accessible and available.

Indeed, schooling can be all the more important for children and families in times of crisis. Unfortunately, huge challenges have to be overcome to maintain education systems in countries at war or in post-conflict situations. A number of measures are urgently needed to preserve and protect the right to education for children affected by war. We should not ignore the valuable contribution that education can make as an efficient means to promote reconciliation and peace.

Schooling: perspectives for the future and a means to get back to life

Schooling is no more a luxury in wartime than in times of peace. On the contrary, during times of conflict, education is indispensable for teaching behaviours that can help children protect themselves and their families. They can gain knowledge crucial to survival, such as a basic health education, personal safety information, and learning about landmines and how to avoid them.

In war-torn countries, education is not only a way of teaching children life skills, but it can also help healing and rehabilitation. At school, children have access to training that gives them hope and teaches them skills for the future. Children benefit from the contact with other children and teachers,

which helps them preserve their physical as well as psychological health. Children attending school in times of conflict have a sense, although limited, of normality, of confidence and of security, which protects them from depression and isolation. Keeping schools open or reopening schools is a way of maintaining or reintroducing normal life into a community and reassures children and their parents. School enrolment serves as a 'barometer' of a community's perceived hope for the future. For example, since the end of the Rwandan crisis, 67% of children have been enrolled in more than 2,000 primary schools across the country—a tremendous sign of confidence in the nation's future.²

The difficulties of preserving education in wartime

The destruction of educational infrastructure is one of the most serious setbacks a country can face. Schools and teachers are often deliberate targets in wartime. About 45% of primary schools in Mozambique were destroyed during the war. In the Rwandan conflict, more than 60% of the teachers fled the country or were killed.³ When a country loses the means to provide instruction to its children and this situation continues for years, it can contribute to further, longer-term instability—as education is a key factor in poverty alleviation and development. Even when education is maintained during the conflict, if teachers are killed, flee or become combatants themselves, who will teach the children? More often than not, after the conflict countries face a lack of school staff and a broken infrastructure.

In wartime, children might be internally displaced or become refugees, with obvious detrimental consequences on their education. A nomadic existence as a displaced child eliminates any hope of regular school attendance. Those who arrive in refugee camps might be sick or malnourished, and their health problems can be exacerbated by the difficult living conditions found there—such as a lack of food, adequate sanitation or drinking water. Furthermore, in chaotic camps children are easy prey for economic or sexual exploitation.

Even when schools and pupils remain in place during a conflict, the instruction they receive is of lesser quality. Teachers often have to deal with increased numbers of students as whole families and communities flee the violence in other areas. Educational materials are often in scarce supply, and school premises might be damaged or destroyed outright. Despite these difficulties, communities can and do rise to the challenge of maintaining or re-establishing education during or after a conflict. In Tanzania, after the influx of half a million refugees from Rwanda in 1994, an emergency education system was set up: makeshift schools were hastily built with rocks and logs thus enabling 65% of refugee children to have access to a minimum level of education.⁴ In Eritrea, in the 1980s, classes were held under trees, in caves or in camouflaged huts. In Afghanistan, women risked their lives to set up underground classes for their daughters.

The challenges to educators do not stop with the end of a war. For example, the sanctions against Iraq, established by the United Nations Security Council on 6 August 1990, led to an alarming drop in that country's educational level. A decade later teachers are poorly paid and still lack adequate teaching materials. Children, suffering from hunger, are less assiduous in class. Many have to work after their lessons or quit school altogether to contribute to the family.

Children in war have special needs. In a climate of fear and instability, it is hard to create an atmosphere of confidence conducive to learning. Children might have witnessed persecution or massacre of their family or community members. Suffering from malnutrition and lacking adequate healthcare, they can be physically and psychologically damaged. Often the teachers, themselves similarly afflicted, do not know how to manage or have the tools to do so.

Child soldiers constitute a special challenge for education systems already under strain. Children as young as 10 have been recruited by armed combatants. They witness atrocities and sometimes

commit them, frequently doing so under the influence of drugs. Children might feel invincible because of their soldier status, and at the same time they are frightened and vulnerable children. By the time they are demobilized—if they are demobilized—they have known only violence, death, hatred and vengeance. They may have been deprived of healthy emotional, intellectual and physical development. Many have become socially isolated and should have the opportunity to benefit from psychological support services, which are usually desperately lacking in the post-war society. Reintegrating these children into the education system poses many difficulties. They sometimes prefer to quit school rather than feel the humiliation of studying with younger children. If they are readmitted to school, how can a child sit next to a former child combatant, when the former has lived with the brutality of the latter? Some schools refuse to admit former child soldiers for fear of violence that could ensue. These children are sometimes rejected by their own families because they are considered a disgrace. The only chance for reintegrating such children into society is through psychological support and specialized education.

Measures to protect education in emergencies

Despite the fact that international humanitarian law protects education and its infrastructures even in times of conflict,⁵ schools and education systems are too often targets.

The international community should demand that combatants respect education infrastructures. Security Council resolution 1261 of 25 August 1999 condemned ‘attacks on objects protected under international law, including places that usually have a significant presence of children such as schools and hospitals’ and called ‘on all parties concerned to put an end to such practices’. Governments should commit themselves to protect these places so that they would constitute ‘peace corridors’ where children would be safe from the conflicts that ravage their countries.

Children in refugee camps should be grouped together to receive basic instruction essential to their future and be involved in educational activities that teach them the principles of equality, of non-discrimination and of respect for the rights of others. Even in make-shift classrooms children can learn to respect others and how to work together.

Special training could be given to teachers so that they would be able to recognize signs of psychological trauma in children—specifically victims of displacement, bereavement and abandonment. Teachers should be able to direct these children to psychological support services that could help them get out of the vicious circle of hatred and vengeance. Of course, this means that countries must provide the resources for such services.

In developing countries, out of the 130 million children who have never attended school, at least two-thirds are girls.⁶ Ensuring that girls get back to school after a conflict has disrupted their studies is especially urgent. Girls who have access to education have better life chances and wider opportunities than ones who have never attended school.

Education as a means to restore peace

After a conflict ends, rebuilding education infrastructures, training teachers, gathering and distributing educational materials must be prioritized. In addition, specific programmes need to be implemented to address the special needs of children in a post-conflict society.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), as well as many NGOs are deeply committed to developing and implementing educational projects that raise awareness about human rights, humanitarian law, tolerance, peaceful settlement of disputes and conflict management. These programmes address essential coping skills and long-term development needs of both children and the community as a whole.

In 1989, UNICEF helped the Lebanese government and 240 NGOs train 10,000 young people who, in turn, organized educational activities that reached a further 200,000 children. The aim of these activities was to promote reconciliation, conflict resolution and reconstruction.⁷ In 1996, under the auspices of UNICEF and in collaboration with the Movement for Peace, millions of children and adults in Colombia mobilized to put an end to violence and work for peace and social justice. They forced the then-government to make this objective a priority.

UNICEF also supports programmes that respond to the psychological needs of displaced children and help prepare them for peace. In Colombia, the programme *El Retorno de la Alegria* (The Return of Joy) engages displaced teenagers in therapeutic games as well as recreational activities to help them recover from psychological trauma. In Rwanda, children learn collaboration and conflict resolution skills thanks to cultural and recreational activities. In Sri Lanka, which has been beset by civil war for more than fifteen years, the curriculum includes lessons on conflict resolution.⁸ Similar initiatives exist around the world.

In Liberia, UNHCR and Save the Children have provided psychosocial support to ex-child soldiers among refugees from Sierra Leone. They have offered them remedial courses as well as vocational training. UNHCR also trained teachers and community leaders to better meet educational needs in Kenya and Guinea. Schools for refugee children provide classes on peace and life skills, as well as teacher training on these matters.

In 1999, UNESCO supported groups of young Kosovars who organized sport and cultural activities for teenagers in six refugee camps in Albania. They were involved in the management of the camps and ensured the security and cleanliness there. They also communicated vital information about landmines.

The ICRC is committed to giving children other perspectives for their future through education, training and work. It tries at the same time to dissuade them from military recruitment. Many NGOs also work in the field, rebuilding schools, training teachers and providing educational materials.

Conclusion

Individual NGOs have made remarkable contributions towards education in many countries, and they have now joined in a Global Campaign for Education. Today, I say to the NGO community: we cannot win the battle ... without your expertise, your energy, and your capacity for action.

United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan⁹

All of these initiatives are encouraging, but much remains to be done. Civil society organizations and NGOs have taken a leading role in raising awareness and demanding accountability of states regarding their treaty commitments. The Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict oversees a network

of local, regional and international NGOs to share information and influence decision-making to protect children. Could such networks include in their efforts a focus on promoting education programmes and vocational training during periods of conflict? The international community should be encouraged to respect the fundamental rights of children during armed conflicts, especially the prohibition to recruit persons under the age of 18 into the armed forces and their participation in hostilities. This presupposes that age 18 be recognized throughout the world as the age of majority, despite of cultural differences, as well as establishing systems for birth registration records where none exist.

On 12 February 2002, the Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflicts entered into force. This protocol imposes more rigorous limits on the recruitment of children in armed conflicts. It remains to be seen how well this Protocol will be respected. Additionally, the United Nations General Assembly's special session on children took place in New York from 8 to 10 May 2002. It aimed at enabling the international community to take stock of progress towards the protection of children since the 1990 World Summit for Children. Many were disappointed at the plan of action, as it reiterated past commitments and did not strengthen a follow-up mechanism. It appears that it will continue to be NGOs, rather than governments, at the forefront of advocating the importance of education in times of conflict, and children's rights in general.

One important civil society initiative is the Global Campaign for Education, a network of development NGOs and teachers' unions operating in 180 countries. The Campaign seeks to hold governments responsible for the fact that 125 million children worldwide are denied access to basic education. But universal primary education will be an impossible goal if we do not develop strategies to specifically address the education needs of one of the most disadvantaged groups—children in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Only worldwide mobilization of civil society and public opinion will force the stakeholders to take action. The Global Campaign for Education has launched a massive public awareness campaign to hold governments, the international financial institutions, international organizations and aid agencies accountable for their promises to children. It is initiatives such as this one, rather than high-level statements and promises, that will ensure that every child's right to an education, even those in conflict zones, is respected.

My dear young people: I see the light in your eyes, the energy of your bodies and the hope that is in your spirit. I know it is you, not I, who will make the future. It is you, not I, who will fix our wrongs and carry forward all that is right with the world.

Nelson Mandela¹⁰

Isabelle Roger

Notes

1. Graça Machel in UNICEF, 2000, 'Our promise to the world's children', in *The State of the World's Children 2001*, UNICEF, at < <http://www.unicef.org/sowc01/>> .
2. Madieng Seck, 'Après la guerre, "Ouvrez les écoles et enseignez la tolérance!"', at < <http://www.famafrique.org/nouv2/nouv00-05-23a.html>> .
3. Canada, Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, *Education*, at < <http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/cfp-pec/nationalforum/elementary/education-en.asp>> .

4. UNICEF 1998, *The State of the World's Children 1999*, Panel 9 – A New Beginning: Education in Emergencies, p. 46, at < <http://www.unicef.org/pubsgen/sowc99/sowc99e.pdf>> .
5. These include the *Geneva Conventions*, *The Additional Protocol re Victims of International Armed Conflicts*, and the *Additional Protocol re Victims of Non-international Armed Conflicts*. See < <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebCONVFULL?OpenView>> for the full text of each.
6. Canadian International Development Agency, *Basic education—Ensuring opportunity for all*, at < <http://www.acid-cida.gc.ca/education-e>> .
7. UNICEF 1998, *op. cit.*
8. UNICEF 1998, *op. cit.*
9. United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan speaking at a Global Campaign for Education rally in Dakar, Senegal, 27 April 2000.
10. Nelson Mandela in UNICEF 2000, 'Our promise to the world's children', in *The State of the World's Children 2001*, UNICEF, at < http://www.unicef.org/sowc01/our_promise.htm> .

SELECT ON-LINE RESOURCES

Background documents

The Geneva Conventions <http://www.icrc.org/ihl.nsf/WebCONVFULL?OpenView>

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I)

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/93.htm>

Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II)

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/94.htm>

Convention on the Rights of the Child

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/k2crc.htm>

Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/6/protocolchild.htm>

Impact of Armed Conflict on Children (The Machel Report)

<http://www.unicef.org/graca/>

Children and armed conflict (Report of the Secretary-General)

<http://daccess-ods.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/529/46/PDF/N0052946.pdf?OpenElement>

World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children (1990)

<http://www.unicef.org/wsc/declare.htm>

Plan of Action for Implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s

<http://www.unicef.org/wsc/plan.htm>

We the Children: Meeting the promises of the World Summit for Children (issued by Secretary-General Kofi Annan)

http://www.unicef.org/specialesession/about/sgreport-pdf/sgreport_adapted_eng.pdf

United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ('The Beijing Rules')

http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu3/b/h_comp48.htm

ILO Convention No. 182, against the Worst Forms of Child Labour

<http://www.ilo.org/public/english/standards/ipecc/ratification/convention/text.htm>

United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education

<http://disarmament.un.org/education/study.html>

International organizations and agencies

Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

<http://157.150.184.6/osrsgcaac/>

Includes information and resources concerning the protection, rights and well-being of children at every phase of conflict.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

<http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu2/isschild.htm>

Good resource for documentation on children's rights, including the full texts of conventions and declarations, as well as information on children in armed conflict and children in detention.

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)

<http://www.unicef.org>

Site includes the annual report *The State of the World's Children*, thematic pages on children in war, pages dedicated to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its protocols and other issues concerning the protection of children.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

<http://www.unesco.org/education/index.shtml>

The education homepage at UNESCO contains information on 'Education for All', emergency assistance and non-violence.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

<http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home?page=PROTECT&id=3b8373992>

A series of pages dedicated to resources concerning the estimated 25 million children currently uprooted from their homes.

United Nations Special Session on Children<http://www.unicef.org/specialsession/>

Includes background information, the programme, speeches and final document of the May 2002 session, as well as historical information and documents concerning the 1990 World Summit for Children.

United Nations children's pagehttp://www.un.org/partners/civil_society/m-child.htm

Offers links to United Nations agencies, departments and programmes working on issues concerning children, as well as key documents.

International Committee of the Red Crosshttp://www.icrc.org/Web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList2/Focus:Children_and_War

The pages at the ICRC dedicated to children and war, with emphasis on the ICRC's activities, the relevant body of international humanitarian law and key documents.

Campaigns and advocacy groups**Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict**<http://www.watchlist.org>

The Watchlist project, a network of local and international NGOs, produces country reports detailing factors related to the impact or threat of armed conflict on children.

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers<http://www.child-soldiers.org>

An international movement of organizations and individuals committed to ending the use of children as soldiers. Site includes *Child Soldiers Newsletter* and the *Global Report on Child Soldiers 2001*.

Quaker United Nations Office<http://www.geneva.quuno.info/>

Site includes coverage of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, as well as materials on refugees, child soldiers, and wider peace and disarmament issues.

Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children<http://www.womenscommission.org>

An expert resource and advocacy organization that monitors the care and protection of refugee women and children. Site includes regional and annual reports, as well as action alerts.

Child Rights Information Network<http://www.crin.org>

A global network that disseminates information about the Convention on the Rights of the Child and child rights.

International Save the Children Alliance<http://www.savethechildren.org/>

Use this link to visit the sites of the thirty national Save the Children offices and programmes. Each national office has excellent resources on its individual site (on the lower left menu, click on 'International Alliance').

Global Campaign for Educationhttp://www.campaignforeducation.org/_html/home/welcome/frameset.shtml

Site includes reports and resources on the 'Education for All' movement.

Global Movement for Children<http://www.gmfc.org>

The Global Movement for Children is a global network dedicated to the cause of children's rights. Site includes links to the organizations involved and suggestions for action.

UNIDIR ACTIVITIES

Weapons for Development

The project 'Weapons for Development' analyses select weapons collection programmes in order to assist policy makers, donor countries, United Nations agencies and NGOs devise better strategies to collect weapons. Using specific programmes in Albania, Cambodia, Congo, Mali and Papua New Guinea as case studies, the criteria for success for weapons collection will be determined in conjunction with identifying 'best practices' in collection methods, locations and storage facilities. Beneficiaries of collection programmes are placed at the centre of the research through Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E) techniques.

The project will result in country-specific publications, an overall synthesis publication and a publication highlighting 'best practices' and policy recommendations.

For more information, please contact:

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Strengthening the Role of Regional Organizations in Treaty Implementation

UNIDIR, in collaboration with the Monterey Institute for International Studies, has undertaken a project that focuses on strengthening the role of regional organizations in non-proliferation and arms control treaty implementation. Regional organizations could play a significant role in addressing questions of compliance related to WMD agreements.

All correspondence can be addressed to UNIDIR, A.522, Palais des Nations, 1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. The Institute's fax number is + 41 (0)22 917 0176.

The project was launched with a small workshop in Geneva in June to discuss the existing verification system for WMD treaties and the gaps that regional organizations could potentially fill. Based on the findings from the workshop, authors were selected and a series of consultations have started with diplomats (in Geneva, Vienna and the Hague), academics, officials from multilateral treaty-implementing organizations (such as the IAEA, CTBTO and OPCW), and experts in the field of verification. Interviews with key experts on the operational capabilities and roles of their regional organizations will assist to round out the research.

The preliminary findings will be presented at an international meeting where academics, multilateral arms control and disarmament experts, non-governmental organizations, diplomats, and representatives from both regional and treaty-implementing organizations will be invited to discuss the papers. The Ploughshares Fund has generously contributed to the establishment of this project.

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Handbook on Verification and Compliance

Successful arms control in the Middle East—an essential component of the peace process—will require a thorough examination of the means to determine compliance and of the implications of regional verification mechanisms. In order to assist the process of ascertaining the necessary level and the approach to compliance monitoring in the Middle East, UNIDIR and VERTIC are producing a compendium of agreements and terms, in-depth analyses of approaches to verification, methods and technologies, and practical experiences. The book will be published in English and Arabic, in hard copy and electronic format (with hyperlink text).

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Tactical Nuclear Weapons

To support efforts to address and curb the problem of TNWs, UNIDIR has launched a long-term project that includes a series of seminars and publications as well as attempts to raise the problem of

TNWs in the eyes of the wider public through the international media. Various aspects of this project are carried out in cooperation with the Monterey Institute of International Studies and the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt.

UNIDIR's latest publication on TNWs is *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Time for Control*. This book examines in detail and advances recommendations on codification as well as transparency and confidence-building measures related to the 1991 parallel unilateral declarations issued by the Presidents of the United States of America and the Russian Federation.

Additionally, UNIDIR recently published *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: Options for Control* and *Tactical Nuclear Weapons: A Perspective from Ukraine* (see publications section).

For the ten-year anniversary of the 1991 unilateral declarations UNIDIR held a seminar at the United Nations Headquarters on 24 September 2001. The meeting generated a stimulating discussion and was extremely well attended. A seminar report is available on our website. This summary was also distributed at the 2002 NPT PrepCom in New York. More detailed proceedings will be published in 2002.

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Visiting Fellowship Programme

UNIDIR's 2002 visiting research fellowship programme on regional security focused on the Middle East. Four researchers were invited to Geneva for six months. The researchers working collectively on a single research paper, focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The paper, entitled *The Roles of Civil Society and Governments in Building Trust and Confidence Among the Israeli and Palestinian Peoples*, will be published by UNIDIR.

The visiting research fellowship programme helps generate regional cooperation and confidence building by bringing together researchers who might not have the opportunity to work collaboratively in other circumstances. The fellowship also provides an opportunity to interact with the UN Secretariat, government delegations, international organizations and non-governmental institutes, and contribute to UNIDIR's wider research programme.

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Fissile Materials

The UNIDIR publication *Fissile Material Stocks: Characteristics, Measures and Policy Options* by William Walker and Frans Berkhout is intended to support the Conference on Disarmament in its thinking on the range of options available to deal with stocks of fissile material. UNIDIR has also commissioned a report on fissile material inventories to provide an up-to-date account of fissile materials, assess national policies related to the production, disposition and verification of fissile materials, and identify facilities and locations which might be subject to safeguards under a treaty. In March 2001, the Institute (in collaboration with the German Delegation to the Conference on Disarmament) held a meeting on the verification of a fissile material cut-off treaty.

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Participatory Approaches to Evaluating the Implementation of Humanitarian Landmine Action

Evaluating mine action programmes in terms of cost-effectiveness and efficiency has its merits in a donor community concerned with value for money in project implementation. But humanitarian mine action is by definition a qualitative process. It is designed to enhance human security, provide victim assistance and encourage ownership of mine action programmes in affected communities and regions. Traditional evaluation and monitoring techniques do not readily lend themselves to assessments of such qualitative goals and objectives. Participatory monitoring and evaluation techniques (PM&E) are more appropriate to this task. PM&E involves key stakeholders in identifying their needs and assessing the most appropriate options for meeting those needs. Experience has shown that participatory approaches improve the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of donor programmes' actions and outcomes. By placing people at the centre of the monitoring and evaluation process, mine action efforts are guaranteed to empower local communities and encourage local ownership. The proposed pilot study is not only designed to pioneer PM&E approaches within the landmine community, but also to provide a unique opportunity for UNIDIR to help innovate bottom-up approaches to arms control implementation.

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The Costs of Disarmament

In order to present the cost-benefit analysis of disarmament, UNIDIR proposes to take key countries as examples and carefully research what their commitments to disarmament treaties mean to them in terms of financial and resource costs. In addition, the project will try to ascertain what each country perceives are the benefits brought to them through their participation in the agreements and whether there is consensus that there is a net gain to the state in question. The aim of the project is to achieve a better understanding of the costs and benefits of disarmament agreements with a view to assisting policy-makers decide how money is spent on such commitments, which budget lines are best structured to handle such spending and how states could approach this aspect of negotiations in the future.

A recent publication, *Costs of Disarmament—Rethinking the Price Tag: A Methodological Inquiry into the Costs and Benefits of Arms Control*, outlines the methodological basis of the research.

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Peace-building and Practical Disarmament in West Africa

UNIDIR's West Africa project focuses on promoting the role of West African civil society in the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The project seeks to:

- Inform and raise awareness on the problem, notably security and humanitarian threats;
- Undertake locally based research with civil society groups and produce collaborative publications;
- Organize national and regional debates in West Africa to stimulate discussion on people-centred security and small arms proliferation;
- Build local capacities for peace and security research and light weapons monitoring regimes;
- Work for transparency and facilitate participation in decision-making and policy implementation;
- Enhance confidence-building and strengthen regional stability through community-based and cross-border arms control and peace-building; and
- Assist in the establishment of a culture of peace and disarmament.

The project operates in partnership with local non-governmental and community-based organizations. For the last two years the project has been working mainly in Sierra Leone and Liberia. For the coming two years, the project will enlarge its scope to Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso. Specific categories of people with high peace-building potential, such as women, young

people, religious and traditional leaders, and the media, will be targeted as partners. Police forces and customs services will also be included.

Cooperating for Peace in West Africa: An Agenda for the 21st Century and *Bound to Cooperate: Conflict, Peace and People in Sierra Leone*, two recent publications of the project, are described in detail in the publications section.

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Geneva Forum

Together with the Programme for Strategic and International Security Studies of the Graduate Institute of International Studies and the Quaker United Nations Office, UNIDIR organizes an ongoing discussion series called the Geneva Forum.

The Geneva Forum is an intellectual space in which expertise on a broad range of disarmament issues is shared among government delegates, United Nations personnel, NGOs and academics. Experts from various fields of disarmament are regularly invited to share their knowledge in briefings, seminars and workshops. Such meetings provide disarmament negotiators with valuable opportunities to benefit from in-depth research and to interact with one another in a relatively informal atmosphere. The issues dealt with in Geneva Forum meetings reflect the priorities of the disarmament agenda at any given time. The aim is to provide negotiators with relevant information that will assist them in their disarmament work.

The Geneva Forum is expanding its work thanks to a generous grant from the Ford Foundation. New areas of activity will include increased networking between Geneva's disarmament, human rights and humanitarian communities in order to discuss mutual interests in security and disarmament issues and to explore possibilities for coordination and collaboration. Also, in recognition of the important role that public opinion plays in advancing disarmament, the Geneva Forum will intensify its interaction with international media covering disarmament issues in Geneva.

The Geneva Forum has produced the *Media Guide to Disarmament in Geneva*—a succinct and practical tool to facilitate the work of media professionals by linking them with key sources of information. The *Media Guide to Disarmament in Geneva* includes contact information for hundreds of experts in disarmament, arms control and security issues who have agreed to act as points of reference for media enquiries. The guide is available on our website.

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UNIDIR Disarmament Seminars

UNIDIR occasionally holds small, informal meetings on various topics related to disarmament, security and non-proliferation. These off-the-record gatherings allow members of the disarmament community, missions and NGOs to have an opportunity to discuss a specific topic with an expert. Recent topics covered include: verification of nuclear disarmament, restoring momentum to nuclear disarmament, missile defences, disarmament as humanitarian action, deadlock at the Conference on Disarmament, fissile materials, and next steps for nuclear disarmament and arms control. Speakers at recent meetings have included: Jonathan Dean, Daryl Kimball, Soren Jessen-Petersen, Martin Griffiths, Randall Forsberg, Rebecca Johnson, Tariq Rauf, Mutiah Alagappa, Graham Andrew, Anatoli Diakov, Annette Schaper, Tom Shea, Alain Munier, Seiichiro Noburu, Munir Akram, Thomas Markram, Christopher Westdal, Yuri Kapralov, Fu Zhigong, Robert Grey, William Potter, Lewis Dunn, Paolo Cotta-Ramusino and Harald Müller.

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DATARIs

In cooperation with SIPRI (Stockholm International Peace Research Institute), UNIDIR has developed an online database of disarmament, arms control, security and peace research institutes and projects around the world. The database can be accessed through UNIDIR's website and institutes can update their information via a password. A new feature allows the inclusion of the names of the director and research staff.

If you would like your institute to be included in DATARIs, please contact:

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