

Handbook

Hello and welcome all to this committee, the vision of the African Union is that of: “An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena.”

This vision of a new, forwardlooking, dynamic and integrated Africa will be fully realized through relentless struggle on several fronts and as a long-term endeavor. The African Union has shifted focus from supporting liberation movements in the erstwhile African territories under colonialism and apartheid, as envisaged by the OAU since 1963 and the Constitutive Act, to an organization spearheading Africa’s development and integration.

During the two days of Tarbutmun in this committee we will try to solve a variety of problems that are crucial to the growth of the world as a better place for everyone who lives in it.

We trust all of you to try and excel at this debate, giving the best of yourselves to accomplish our committee’s goals and have some good and interesting debating sessions while doing so.

We’re sure that this is going to be a fun and productive committee
Good luck and see you in a few weeks

Chairs:

Uri Barky
President

Emilio Cohen
Moderator

Topics to discuss:

Topic A: Armed forces without children: ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers

Topic B: The Boko Haram situation and the government involvement in this issue

Most Important Countries:

Nigeria
Egypt
Sierra Leone
Guinea

Topic A:

Armed forces without children: ending the recruitment and use of child soldiers

Definition of Child Soldier:

“A child associated with an armed force or armed group refers to any person below 18 years of age who is, or who has been, recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, spies or for sexual purposes.”

The military use of children takes three distinct forms: children can take direct part in hostilities (child soldiers), or they can be used in support roles such as porters, spies, messengers, lookouts; or they can be used for political advantage either as human shields or in propaganda.



Throughout history and in many cultures, children have been extensively involved in military campaigns even when such practices were against cultural morals. In WW1, in Great Britain 250,000 boys under 19 managed to join the army. In WW2, child soldiers fought throughout Eastern Europe, in the Warsaw Uprising, in the Jewish resistance, and in the Soviet Army. Since the 1970s, a number of international conventions have come into effect that try to limit the participation of

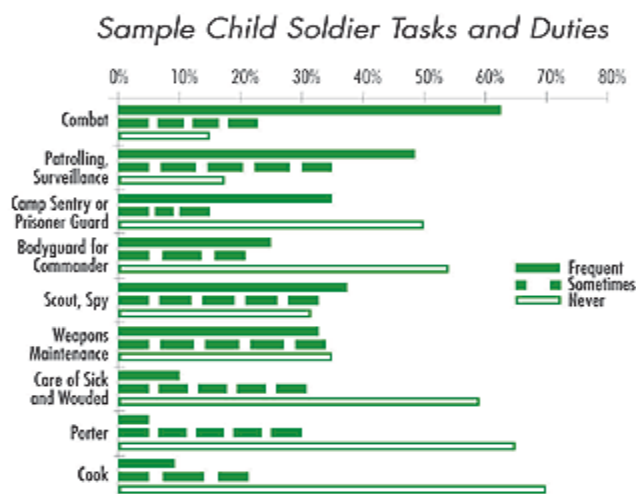
children in armed conflicts, nevertheless the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers reports that the use of children in military forces, and the active participation of children in armed conflicts is widespread.

According to Wessels (1997), "The use of children in armed conflict is global in scope—a far greater problem than suggested by the scant attention it has received. Child soldiers are found from Central America to the Great Lakes region of Central Africa, and from Belfast in the north to Angola in the south" (p. 2). Children are easy targets to recruit for military purposes because of their vulnerability to influence. Many are seized and recruited by force whereas others join to escape their reality and circumstances.

Hundreds of thousands of children are used as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world. Many children are abducted and beaten into submission; others join military groups to escape poverty, to defend their communities, out of a feeling of revenge or for other reasons.

In many conflicts children take direct part in combat. However, their role is not limited to fighting. Many girls and boys start out in support functions that also entail great risk and hardship.

One of the common tasks assigned to children is to serve as porters, often carrying heavy loads, including ammunition or injured soldiers. Some children act as lookouts, messengers, cooks or other routine duties. Girls are particularly vulnerable. They are often forced to serve as sexual slaves. Moreover, the use of children for acts of terror, including as suicide bombers, has emerged as a phenomenon of modern warfare.



In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 38, proclaimed: "State parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of 15 years do not take a direct part in hostilities." However, people who are over the age of 15 but under the age of 18 are still voluntarily able to take part in combat as soldiers. The Optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict to the Convention that came into force in 2002 stipulates that its State Parties - "shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons below the age of 18 do not take a direct part in hostilities and that they are not compulsorily recruited into their armed forces".[6] The Optional Protocol further obligates states to "take all feasible measures to prevent such recruitment and use, including the adoption of legal measures necessary to prohibit and criminalize such practices." (Art 4, Optional Protocol.)[7] Likewise, under the Optional Protocol states are required to demobilize children within their jurisdiction who have been recruited or used in hostilities, and to provide assistance for their physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration.

Regardless of how children are recruited and of their roles, child soldiers are victims, whose participation in conflict bears serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being. They are commonly subject to abuse and most of them witness death, killing, and sexual violence. Many are forced to perpetrate these atrocities and some suffer serious long-term psychological consequences. The reintegration of these children into civilian life is a complex process.

The United Nations Security Council convenes regularly to debate, receive reports, and pass resolutions under the heading "Children in armed conflict". The most recent meeting was on 17 July 2008. The first resolution on the issue, Resolution 1261, was passed in 1999 (it did not contain references to any earlier resolutions)



In a resolution in 2005 the Security Council requested that the action plan for establishing a monitoring, reporting and compliance mechanism produced by the Secretary-General be implemented without delay.

According to Article 77.2 of the Additional Protocol I to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts, adopted in 1977:

“The Parties to the conflict shall take all feasible measures in order that children who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities and, in particular, they shall refrain from recruiting them into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, the Parties to the conflict shall endeavor to give priority to those who are oldest”

As the ICRC commentary on Protocol it makes clear, this is not a complete ban on the use of children in conflict. The ICRC had suggested that the Parties to the conflict should "take all necessary measures", which became in the final text, "take all feasible measures" which is not a total prohibition on their doing so because feasible should be understood as meaning "capable of being done, accomplished or carried out, possible or practicable". Refraining from recruiting children under fifteen does not exclude children who volunteer for armed service. During the negotiations over the clause "take a part in hostilities" the word "direct" was added to it, this opens up the possibility that child volunteers could be involved indirectly in hostilities, gathering and transmitting military information, helping in the transportation of arms and munitions, provision of supplies etc.

Opinion is currently divided over whether children should be prosecuted for committing war crimes.

International law does not prohibit the prosecution of children who commit war crimes, but the article 37 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child does limit the punishment that a child can receive including "Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age.



Many child soldiers fought in the Sierra Leone Civil War. In its wake, the UN sanctioned the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) to try the participants for war crimes and other breaches of humanitarian law. The statute of the SCSL gave the court jurisdiction over persons aged 15 and older, however the Paris Principles state that children who participated in armed conflict:

“... who are accused of crimes under international law allegedly committed while they were associated with armed forces or armed groups should be considered primarily as victims of offences against international law; not only as perpetrators. They must be treated in accordance with international law in a framework of restorative justice and social rehabilitation, consistent with international law which offers children special protection through numerous agreements and principles.”

It is estimated in the academic literature that up to 300,000 children form a part of both irregular, and regular armed forces worldwide as child soldiers. In Africa it is estimated that up to 120,000 children are currently used as combatants or support personnel, representing 40 per cent of the worldwide total. Africa has the highest growth rate in the use of children in conflict, and on average, the age of those enlisted is also decreasing

The Cape Town Principles and Best Practices, adopted by the NGO Working Group on the Convention on the Rights of Children and UNICEF at a symposium on the prevention of recruitment of children into the armed forces and on demobilization and social regeneration of child soldiers in Africa in April 1997, proposed that African Governments should adopt and ratify the Optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict raising the minimum age from 15 to 18,

and that African Governments should ratify and implement other pertinent treaties and incorporate them into national law. The symposium defines a child soldier as any person under age 18 who is "part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms." [27]

Up to half of the world's child soldiers are in Africa according to UNOCHA. [26] In 2004 one estimate put the number of children involved in armed conflict including combat roles at 100,000. [28] In the end titles of the film Blood Diamond, it is claimed that "there are still 200,000 child soldiers in Africa". Many of these children are "invisible children," orphaned by AIDS, violence and war. These children are as young as 7 years old and are forced into conflict due to poverty, sold by their parents, kidnapped, or tricked into joining. Organizations like Invisible Children and films like Invisible Children: Rough Cut help to bring to light the use of child soldiers; Actress Kristen Bell has also been fighting for saving child soldiers through Invisible Children since its founding in 2004.

Warfare Waged by the Young

Conflicts in these nations are notable for their brutality and the participation of child soldiers.



Burundi

In 2004 hundreds of child soldiers served in the Forces Nationales pour la Libération (FNL), an armed rebel Hutu group. Children between the ages of 10 and 16 were also conscripted by the Burgundies military.

Central African Republic

Between 2001 and 2003, children served in armed rebel groups, including the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement, UFDR).

Chad

Child soldiers are fighting with the Chadian Military, integrated rebel forces – the United Front for Democratic Change (Front Uni pour le Changement, FUC), local self-defense forces known as Tora Boro militias, and two Sudanese rebel movements operating in Chad – the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the G-19 faction of the Sudanese Liberation Army (SLA).

Cote d'Ivoire[edit]

During the 2002 civil war, "children were recruited, often forcibly, by both sides."

A group of demobilized child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
Democratic Republic of Congo[edit]

Main article: Child soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo

Thousands of children serve in the military, as well as the various rebel militias. At the height of the Second Congo War, it has been estimated that more than 30,000 children were fighting with various parties to the conflict. It was claimed that the Lord's Resistance Army recruited this number in the film Kony 2012.

Nowadays the Democratic Republic of Congo has one of the highest rates of child soldiers all over the world. The international court has taken part on the judgment of these practices during the war. Thomas Lubanga Dyilo, one of the warlords in the DRC has been charged with 14 years in prison because of the recruiting of child soldiers between 2002 and 2003.[33] Lubanga directed the Union of Congolese Patriots and its armed wing Patriotic Forces for the Liberation of Congo. The children were forced to fight in the armed conflict of Ituri, located on the north-east of the country, a place with a high amount of mineral resources. This trial is the first of this kind and could set precedent legislation against these violations of human rights.[citation needed]

Rwanda

In 2002, child soldiers were used by Rwandan government forces and paramilitaries, operating within the Democratic Republic of Congo.[28]

Sierra Leone

In *Armies of the Young: Child Soldiers in War and Terrorism* anthropologist David M. Rosen discusses the murders, rapes, tortures, and the thousands of amputations committed by the Small Boys Unit of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) during Sierra Leone's civil war (1991–2001).[34] Another book describing the civil war is *A Long Way Gone* by Ishmael Beah. It describes the civil war from the view of Ishmael when he was forced to be a soldier. In popular culture, movies like "Blood Diamond" are set at the backdrop of the Civil War in Sierra Leone.

Somalia

A report published by Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers in 2004 estimated that since 1991, 200,000 children carried arms or had been recruited in the country's militias against their will.[29]

South Africa

During the Second Boer War (1899-1902) children were used both as scouts and as despatch carriers by the British to move through the lines of Boer fighters besieging the town of Mafikeng. This gave rise to the establishment of the Scout movement by Robert Baden-Powell, a lieutenant general in the British Army, in 1907.[citation needed]

Uganda

Over the past twenty years, the rebel Lord's Resistance Army has abducted more than 30,000 boys and girls as soldiers. Attacks against Uganda's Acholi people have resulted in severe trauma to civilians from extreme violence and abduction. Girls are often forced to be sex slaves.[35] The Uganda People's Defence Force has recruited small numbers of children into its forces as young as 13, including Local Defense Units.[citation needed] In 22 April 2004, resolution 1539 was put in place by the United Nations Security Council

When discussing children in armed conflict there is much information to call upon. Nicola Ansell who wrote "Children, Youth and Development" is the source for my information on children in armed conflict. Ansell explains that each child is affected in different ways, often worse than what adults experience. Traditionally societies have aimed to protect the child in war. In Uganda, the Acholi people would avoid attacking children in order to facilitate post-conflict reconciliation.[36] According to the international law special treatment is given to children who are under 15 years

of age; these children should not be illogically killed, maimed or tortured. Children within these criteria should be given food and shelter and allowed to remain with their families if possible. There are cases when these children are intentionally targeted, used as human shields, or killed by terrorists.[37] Roughly 90% of the victims of war are civilians, estimating half to be children.

Children in war are often victim to accidental injury or untimely deaths as a result of their curiosity, land mines are an example of this, they are designed to injure adults but in fact they are the cause of death of roughly 10,000 children per year. However, the deaths usually occur long after the war is over. Children are not the target during a conflict, and if they are injured it usually by accident, most children are "secondary victims" or "observers" subjected to damage of family property or death/injury to their kin leaving them orphans. Roughly 1 million children have become orphans as a result from armed conflict leaving the internally displaced persons (IDP) or refugees overcrowded, unhygienic subjecting the children to disease.

Some shocking facts: <http://answersafrica.com/child-soldiers-in-africa.html>