

Model United Nations at UCSD presents
On Saturday April 25th, and Sunday April 26th, 2015

United Nations

Children's Fund



TritonMUN XI



Introduction

Welcome Delegates,

My name is John Murillo, and I am majoring in Political Science with an emphasis in Public Law. I just transferred to UC San Diego and am now a third year student in Thurgood Marshall College. I have always wanted to be a part of Model UN, but my high school did not have a team. Therefore, I joined Model UN here at UCSD quickly, have served a Rapporteur during a previous conference, and have enjoyed spending my time participating and learning. I also enjoy spending my time participating on the UCSD Club Swim Team, where we practice each week, and go to competitions at other universities. I am also part of a group called the Education Corps where we tutor high poverty elementary schools weekly.

Our vice chair is Mariette Assaad Boutros. Her major is International Studies with an emphasis on Economics, and she is a third year in Eleanor Roosevelt College. She has also been a Rapporteur for the 2014 Triton Model UN, and has participated in the Model Arab League this past November in DC. Rigorous research has intensified her interest in the topics of Children and Armed Conflict, and Child Homelessness. She is currently interning at the Department of Homeland Security and taking classes at UCDC.

During our conference I am looking forward to creative ideas when dealing with the problems we face, as well as good collaboration between you and your fellow delegates. Both topics are about an important member of our society, children, making the issues something that should be at the forefront of our minds during committee. I hope everyone will enjoy the discussion, and learn from the perspectives of others during our conference.

Sincerely Your Chair,

John Murillo

jpmurill@ucsd.edu



Topic A: Eliminating Child Homelessness

I. Background

Child homelessness is an issue with no technical start date in history and the problem that persists today worldwide. All countries in the world have certain degrees of children under 18 living on the streets without homes, however it can be difficult to get a grasp on exactly how many due to their lack of a permanent residence. While calling them, “homeless children,” is accurate, in the international community a more appropriate term is street children, and they will be referred to as such for the remainder of this guide¹. Though some people consider “street children” to be a stigmatizing label, it serves an important unifying label for these children by giving them a sense of identity². It is also important to note that street children are hard to protect and provide services for because they are so widespread and hard to define making this issue even more difficult to effectively address³.

To begin, one must consider how these young children end up homeless and on the streets. People tend to blame the poverty a family is facing and say that it caused a breakdown leading to the child’s departure⁴. This is a misconception. Families often do not always break down, nor do they abandon their children⁵. The answer as to why these children are on the street is much more nuanced and can occur due to many different variables. Immediate reasons could

¹Ennew, Judith. "Introduction: Homes, Places and Spaces in the Construction of Street Children and Street Youth." *Children Youth and Environments*. Vol. 13, No. 1, Street Children and Other Papers (2003): 81-104. JSTOR. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

² UNICEF. "The State of the World's Children 2006." *The State of the World's Children 2006*. N.p., 2006. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.

³Ibid.

⁴Ennew, Judith. "Introduction: Homes, Places and Spaces in the Construction of Street Children and Street Youth." *Children Youth and Environments*. Vol. 13, No. 1, Street Children and Other Papers (2003): 81-104. JSTOR. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

⁵ Ibid.



be a drop of income or a sudden death or illness in the family. The child either then feels like they must go on the streets and work to help reduce the burden their families face, or that there is no other option but to go to the streets⁶. There could also be a cultural reason as to why these children feel the need to go to the streets i.e. it is something each member of his or her society must do, and is an indicator of growing up. There could also be a perpetuated expectation that working on the streets is a way of life in their culture, and they oftentimes must do it to support their family⁷.

It is important to understand why the problem of street children still exists, even though the documents discussed above have outlined a practical method to implement these solutions. The main reason these children still live on the street in less than ideal conditions is because of the lack of conviction to solve the problem by governments. Only some governments have even implemented programs to solve this problem, such as community outreach or by instituting special privileges for street children in the judicial system. One method is by having homeless shelters, however a major problem with this is the lack of funding, beds, and other resources made available to these homeless children⁸. Because of the problems street children face on a daily basis, they focus primarily on day-by-day events, and do not worry about a future for themselves, this mentality could be changed if street children were more educated on how they can receive assistance⁹.

Now that the problem has been stated, the impact of it on street children can now be assessed. Street children in the United States are a good representative sample of the standard

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Dvorak, Petula. "600 Homeless Children in D.C., and No One Seems to Care." Washington Post. The Washington Post, 8 Feb. 2013. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.

⁹TMN. "PMC to Build a Nest for Street Kids - The Times of India." The Times of India.N.p., 6 Feb. 2008. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.



ailments street children face. In the United States, a well-developed nation compared to the majority of countries, street children are four times more likely to be ill than children with homes, they will go hungry twice as often, and 5,000 lives are taken each year¹⁰. In addition to the problems seen in the United States, less developed countries face higher chances of illness, starvation, child trafficking and sex slavery of street children. As a whole street children are abused by other members of society or the law because they often times lack proper documentation of their citizenship¹¹. Additionally, the lack of money drives many to work in unsafe conditions and often times can get taken by human traffickers or put into sex slavery¹².

¹⁰ "11 Facts About Homeless Teens." *DoSomething.org*. N.p., 2014. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.

¹¹ "Causes + Effects - The Street Child Project." The Street Child Project. N.p., 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.

¹² Ibid.



II. United Nations Involvement

When looking at UN involvement in solving the problem of Street Children, there are two main categories: policies enforced internationally, and those enforced regionally. In 1989, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children had a huge role in creating a framework for the rights of all children globally¹³. This made the rights of children “a legal responsibility falling on the state,” and it was flexible, allowing for adoption by different cultures¹⁴. These rights created by the convention form the basis of the effort to help street children. The Consortium for Street Children published “The Human Rights of Street and Working Children” to help take those basic rights a step further by showing a way they could be implemented.¹⁵ These rules for justice that were created are legally binding everywhere except in Somalia and the United States; all of the other international rules about to be discussed are not legally binding, and thus are just strong suggestions¹⁶.

The UN publishes the Riyadh Guidelines in 1990, which focuses more on the prevention of juvenile delinquency, as opposed to affirming juvenile rights¹⁷. While it applies to all children, street children benefit the most due to its policies on helping at risk, or exploited children¹⁸. It uses a two-pronged approach that focuses on problems that can be encountered socially, and economically. In doing this it attempts to cover all areas a street child may find a problem¹⁹. It

¹³Panther-Brick, Catherine. "Street Children, Human Rights, and Public Health: A Critique and Future Directions." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002): 147-71. JSTOR. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Wernham, Marie. "An Outside Chance: Street Children and Juvenile Justice." (n.d.): n. pag. UNICEF, 3 June 2004. Web.

¹⁷"United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines), G.A. Res. 45/112, Annex, 45 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49A) at 201, U.N. Doc. A/45/49 (1990)." N.p., 1990. Web.

¹⁸Wernham, Marie. "An Outside Chance: Street Children and Juvenile Justice." (n.d.): n. pag. UNICEF, 3 June 2004. Web.

¹⁹"United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines), G.A. Res.



promotes having a wide range of services and programs at the community level, and requires prevention programs to give priority to at risk children²⁰.

In 1985, the Beijing Rules were introduced, which assisted, in setting the, “minimum rules for the administration of juvenile justice ²¹.” It stresses the need for a better judicial system for children, and encourages judicial bodies to be proportionate in weighing the crime committed, the age of the child, and the circumstances around them that would have contributed ²². It emphasizes the importance of rehabilitation and that community resources should be used to help the child receive an education, or employment ²³.

In 1990, following the theme of protecting children in the judicial system, the UN put out the “JDLS,” or the UN Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty ²⁴. This resolution focused on setting standards for children who are incarcerated ²⁵. It outlines that children should be given priority in receiving a speedy trial, be placed in small open prison facilities, be provided with proper food, clothing, medicine, and education. The JDLS believes that all of this and more must be guaranteed when children are involved in the jail system, and that qualified inspectors must check to make certain that these rules and regulations are being followed so that children are not mistreated²⁶.

It is worth noting the combined strength that the Riyadh, Beijing, and JDL guidelines can have. While they have no legal power, they fight child inequality in three interlinked areas: social and economic policies put in place to stop children from doing any misdoings (Ridyah), hav-

45/112, Annex, 45 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49A) at 201, U.N. Doc. A/45/49 (1990)." N.p., 1990. Web.

²⁰ Ibid

²¹ "Working with Children in Conflict with the Law." UNICEF 19.5B (2013): 2769-771. 2009. Web.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ "UNICEF Toolkit on Diversion and Alternatives to Detention 2009." UNICEF, 2009. Web.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.



ing a justice system that is willing to be specialized in its dealing with children (Beijing), and finally young people having rights, and special privileges once they are incarcerated (JDLs)²⁷.

The last international resolution is the Vienna Guideline, published in 1997²⁸. This resolution focuses on how governments handle juvenile justice, and what actions (if any) are being taken to “promote effective application of the international rules of justice for children.”²⁹ The document helps establish measures to ensure justice for children based on all of the international rules discussed above. The Vienna Guidelines serve as the last part of the puzzle, in that it completes the three previous resolutions by making sure they are being implemented internationally.

While all of these international rules were meant to apply across all cultures, the situation in Africa was different³⁰. Because of the many different cultural practices in Africa, such as corporal punishment, child labor, early marriage, and female genital mutilation, a modified rule set had to be created to allow for their unique cultures³¹. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children was thus created, it allowed for harmful cultural practices to occur, but also made allowances for children in the criminal justice system, such as no child will be subject to torture, and every child shall be presumed innocent until proven guilty³².

²⁷Wernham, Marie. "An Outside Chance: Street Children and Juvenile Justice." (n.d.): n. pag. UNICEF, 3 June 2004. Web.

²⁸ "Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System." *Guidelines for Action on Children in the Criminal Justice System*. UNICEF, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰ "For Children & Youth." UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa. UNICEF, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

³¹Ibid.

³² Ibid.



III. Bloc Positions

Africa

Egypt is taking great steps towards solving the problem, although they have a large and growing population of street children that is hard to tack a number on, it is improving ever so slightly, slowing down the growth³³. This is largely due to the actions of UNICEF, the Egyptian Government, and other NGO's, all combining their resources to help create centers for education and empowerment throughout Egypt for street children³⁴. The causes of child homelessness in Kenya was rapid modernization which led to urban poverty, and rural-urban migration which broke up families and took away a safety net that ensued with increased child abuse³⁵. Although Sierra Leone was thought to be one of the poorest nations in the world, it has now shown signs of improvement. But for children, the lack of child rights and the extreme poverty encasing much of the city is still present³⁶. Children are located primarily in rural areas that give little opportunity to escape the poverty they are in³⁷. Because of the prevalence of witchcraft, and the amount of unprotected children on the streets, many are then taken used in ritual sacrifices³⁸. Street children are a growing group of our population, their needs need to be addressed, and their rights reaffirmed in order to solve this problem affecting the world's youth.

Asia

In Bangladesh there is a growing number of street children, and they are projected to be

³³ "Child Protection." *UNICEF Egypt*. UNICEF, n.d. Web. 04 Jan. 2015.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Cottrell-Boyce, Joe (2010). "THE ROLE OF SOLVENTS IN THE LIVES OF STREET CHILDREN". *African Journal of Drug & Alcohol Studies* 9 (2): 93–102. doi:10.4314/ajdas.v9i2.64142. Retrieved 28 January 2014.

³⁶ "What and Where." *Street Child*. N.p., n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Causes + Effects - The Street Child Project." *The Street Child Project*. N.p., 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.



1.14 million street children in 2014, even though the situation is improving³⁹. In India, over 11 million children earning livings on the street and girls often are trapped into prostitution. One reason is India's rapid growth, which increased the gap between the poor and rich making India, "one of the largest child labor forces in the world."⁴⁰ In Pakistan there is estimated to be 1.5 million street children and it is due to the disasters and wars faced by the country and various rehabilitation centers by UNICEF have been set off but they are struggling to remain⁴¹. In China, there are approximately 1.5 million street children, primarily due to poverty, or domestic violence⁴². Like most street children they lack security, stability, and are open to abuse⁴³. There has been a steady establishment of nonprofits that strive to educate street children to the point where they return to a proper school, or at the very least provide them job training⁴⁴.

Europe

In Greece there is heavy human trafficking, and state run facilities see constant disappearances of street children because of it. Although corruption persists and there is a lack of programs to help education and protection, the amount of corruption has decreased,⁴⁵. There is a similar situation in Romania with a deficiency of institutions in place to protect children on the streets from government corruption or sex trafficking⁴⁶. Russia has made significant progress in

³⁹ "Street Children - Bangladesh." *Street Children - Bangladesh*.N.p., 21 Feb. 2009. Web. 04 Jan. 2015.

⁴⁰ Saraswathi, edited by B. Bradford Brown, Reed W. Larson, T.S. (2002). *The world's youth : adolescence in eight regions of the globe* (Reprint. ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 052180910X.

⁴¹ Foundation, Azad (2011). *Rapid Situational Analysis of Street Children in Selected Towns of Karachi*. Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan: Azad Foundation.

⁴² "Street Children in China See Hope for a Better Future." *Street Children in China Supported by UNDP-EU*.N.p., n.d. Web. 19 Jan. 2015.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ "Children's Rights: Greece." Library of Congress Home.N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2013.

⁴⁶ "Children". *Conrad N. Hilton Foundation*. Conrad N. Hilton Foundation. 2012. Retrieved 30 November 2012.



decreasing the amount of homeless children⁴⁷. Turkey also has large amounts of street children, and many are faced with sexual exploitation, including boys as much as girls⁴⁸.

Latin America

There are an estimated 40 million street children in Latin America, and there are two categories they fall into, those who live at home, and those who live on the street. Their similarity is that both groups work on the streets⁴⁹. Efforts in Latin America include institutionalizing the children to re-educate them, but it was expensive and treated all children as criminals⁵⁰. There has also been a rehabilitation effort by churches or communities however it is expensive and is long term which most street children cannot swear to⁵¹. The current effective method is outreach, where teaching and educating is emphasized⁵².

North America

The United States has strived forward with the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act of 1978 which helped to fund shelters, and the National Runaway Switchboard which serves as a communication line to help children and struggling families. In North America there is a growing amount of homeless children, it reached record heights in 2013⁵³. Approximately 2 million children leave home each year, and they are predominantly Caucasian females⁵⁴. Also the Child Abuse and

⁴⁷Mikhail Fradkov (2 February 2007). "Russian Federal Government Order №79-p, 26 January 2007. The concept of the federal target program "Children of Russia" for 2007 - 2010". *RG.ru*. Russian Newspaper. Retrieved 29 March 2013.

⁴⁸"Street Children - Turkey." *Street Children - Turkey*.N.p., 1 Aug. 2011. Web. 04 Jan. 2015.

⁴⁹Tacon, P. (1982). "Carlinhos: the hard gloss of city polish". UNICEF news.

⁵⁰Ortiz de Carrizosa, S. and Poertner, J 1992

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³"600 Homeless Children in D.C., and No One Seems to Care." Washington Post. The Washington Post, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.

⁵⁴Flowers, R.Barri. *Street Kids: The Lives of Runaway and Throwaway Teens*. Jefferson, NC:McFarland&, 2010. Print.



Treatment Act of 1974, the National Child Abuse and Neglect Data system, and the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Detention Act all serve to assist homeless children⁵⁵. All of this has equaled lower arrest rates for children and more referral to social welfare programs in place⁵⁶. Canada has an average of 10,000 street children in Toronto alone during the year, and 50 percent are coming from middle and upper class neighborhoods⁵⁷. On the streets they are primarily facing increased illness, and extremely high rates of suicide⁵⁸. The main causes of these children going to the streets are lack of jobs, and affordable housing⁵⁹. Strides have been taken to improve the problem by expanding resources in housing, employment, and community support structures⁶⁰.

⁵⁵Flowers, R. Barri. *Street Kids: The Lives of Runaway and Thrownaway Teens*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland &, 2010. Print.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*

⁵⁷<http://www.covenanthousetoronto.ca/homeless-youth/Strategic-Plan>

⁵⁸*Ibid.*

⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁶⁰*Ibid.*



IV. Questions to Consider

1. While it is easy to know that street children need aid, and that governments have a certain responsibility to assist them, how do we help them when it can be hard to locate them because they lack permanent residence?
2. Though there are several international rules regarding at risk children put in place by the UN, only one is legally binding, the rest serve as strong suggestions. Could having more legally binding resolutions passed assist in the problems faced with Street Children?
3. Once rights or regulations are set in place to protect street children who are in the criminal justice system, how can we truly ensure that they are being granted those rights consistently?
4. To what extent is the government's responsibility to helping street children?
5. Is it fair to enact social welfare programs or have special criminal procedures put in place for these children when they themselves pay no taxes and make few contributions to society?



V. Suggested Sites

[http://www.unicef.org/tdad/PART201\(1\).pdf](http://www.unicef.org/tdad/PART201(1).pdf) - An overview of Street Children internationally

http://www.unicef-irc.org/publications/pdf/igs_streetchildren.pdf - An overview of Street and Working Children

<http://www.unicef.org/sowc97/download/sow2of2.pdf> - Example of ideas for solving the problem of Street Children

<http://www.unicef.org/turkey/dn/cp8.html> - A brief overlook of the issue of Street Children

<http://www.unicef.org/about/history/files/Child-First-CH-05-p-119-148-city-street-rights.pdf> - An overview of the rights of Street Children



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102. doi:[10.4314/ajdas.v9i2.64142](https://doi.org/10.4314/ajdas.v9i2.64142). Retrieved 28 January 2014.

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Children and Other Papers (2003): 81-104. JSTOR. Web. 29 Nov. 2014.

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7721/chilyoutenvi.13.1.0081?ref=no-x-route:e73881c7ea1a76e3effc81ee04ff12b4>>.

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"For Children & Youth." UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa.UNICEF, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.



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Saraswathi, edited by B. Bradford Brown, Reed W. Larson, T.S. (2002). *The world's youth : adolescence in eight regions of the globe* (Reprint. ed.). New York: Cambridge University Press. [ISBN 052180910X](#).

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- 2006.N.p., 2006. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.
- "UNICEF Toolkit on Diversion and Alternatives to Detention 2009." UNICEF, 2009. Web.
- "United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines), G.A. Res. 45/112, Annex, 45 U.N. GAOR Supp. (No. 49A) at 201, U.N. Doc. A/45/49 (1990)." N.p., 1990. Web.
- "600 Homeless Children in D.C., and No One Seems to Care." Washington Post. The Washington Post, n.d. Web. 03 Jan. 2015.
- "11 Facts About Homeless Teens." DoSomething.org. N.p., 2014. Web. 21 Nov. 2014.



Topic B: Children and Armed Conflict Reintegration and Recovery

I. Background

Wars need soldiers, and one particular group is better suited for this job than others. Child soldiers illustrate a very important crisis that the international world faces today, especially in Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Somalia, Chad and South Sudan. Child soldiers are recruited because they are easier to manipulate compared to their adult counterparts and they need less food to survive.⁶¹ These children serve as cooks, spies, human shields, and suicide bombers; additionally, girls are used for sexual purposes.⁶² Apart from hardships these children face as soldiers, they are further excluded from normal lives because they lack a community to return to. It is hard for anyone to accept them after committing various atrocities at such a young age, especially since they were forced to kill someone from their community.⁶³ The United Nations has addressed this problem previously by using the United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), which launched the campaign "Children, Not Soldiers."⁶⁴ Although this effort was established, the United Nations must look for other solutions to help these children who have often become desensitized to violence and assist them in reassimilating into society.

There are many examples of this problem and how it affects our world today. According to the New York Times, child soldiers are used as suicide bombers by ISIS, and to "[carry] weapons sometimes bigger than themselves."⁶⁵ This illustrates that this is a global issue, and not

⁶¹ Security Council, General Assembly. "United Nations Official Document."

⁶² "11 Facts About Child Soldiers."

⁶³ "The Charity for Children Affected by War, War Child."

⁶⁴ Security Council, General Assembly. "United Nations Official Document."

⁶⁵ "U.N. to Send Team to Iraq for Inquiry on ISIS Acts"



confined to one organization, country or region. Another example is child soldiers fighting in Syria, exemplified by the "Syrian war on children" which started three years ago; it is important to note that all parties, including rebel groups as well as the government, are involved in the conflict.⁶⁶ Furthermore, it is reported that children as young as eleven years old are tortured, sleep deprived, raped, whipped, shocked electrically, and have fingernails and toenails ripped; these atrocities are committed to "coerce relatives to surrender or confess."⁶⁷ Another region that has made use of child soldier includes South Sudan. The United Nation estimates that 9,000 children have been recruited.⁶⁸ In South Sudan, both the government and antigovernment forces recruit child soldiers, and the article reports "A growing concern now is the impact of the conflict on the children of South Sudan".⁶⁹ Another army that has used child soldiers is Tatmadaw, a Myanmar military in Burma. Burma's years of unrest make children vulnerable to recruitment, since many are left orphaned.⁷⁰ These examples illustrate that this is a global issue that needs immediate response.

Even before these atrocities started, the United Nation has set up six child protection laws to protect children during armed conflict.⁷¹ Many governments advocate that they are following these laws, although the figures noted above show otherwise. One major consequence that child soldiers face when trying to reintegrate is that "their hearts and souls are shattered."⁷² Even if child soldiers return to their communities, it is often hard to reintegrate since harsh communal judgment and rejection follows due to the atrocities these children committed while serving as

⁶⁶ "U.N. Report Details Abuse of Children in Syrian War"

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ "In South Sudan, a Ghost of Wars Past: Child Soldiers"

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ "The Fight to Free Myanmar's Child Soldiers"

⁷¹ "In South Sudan, a Ghost of Wars Past: Child Soldiers"

⁷² Ibid.



soldiers. The group that faces the most humiliation and hardship is women, especially those who bore children while serving as soldiers.⁷³ A woman from Uganda says that she prefers to be with the rebels and in captivity, since she had a home there and no one discriminated against her.⁷⁴ Non-governmental organizations, like Empowering Hands, have addressed this issue in Uganda by setting up peer groups to help women reintegrate into their communities.⁷⁵ Al-Jazeera reports the story of Ugandan child soldier Bala Walter, who was abducted at age 13. He recalls that he was forced to kill friends and family, not only to become desensitized, but also so he could not have any place to return to.⁷⁶ After twenty years of fighting, he returns and is taken under the wing of World Vision, a center that helps former child soldiers; it is noted that many children that try to return to their communities without seeking help first become drug addicts.⁷⁷ Some of the effects child soldiers deal with in rehabilitation include having nightmares, feeling guilty, and blaming themselves.⁷⁸ Apart from the rehab former child soldiers undergo, the World Vision conducts interviews with the family of the child soldier to prepare for his/her return back to society.⁷⁹ There has been intensive work done to improve the living standard and life of the children who are lucky enough to survive, but there is still a long way until this brutality and human rights violation ends.

⁷³ "Former girl child soldiers face hardships with reintegration in Uganda"

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ "Former LRA child soldier returns home"

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.



II. United Nations Involvement

At present, 158 countries have ratified the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict.⁸⁰ The protocol requires the following: states will not recruit children under 18 years of age into the battlefield, "states should take all possible measures to prevent such recruitment –including legislation to prohibit and criminalize recruitment of child under 18 and involve them in hostilities," states help those under 18 years of age to reintegrate, and armed groups should not recruit anyone under the age of eighteen.⁸¹

In order to take care of this problem, the United Nation has the United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF). One of the main components of UNICEF is saving children's lives by providing clean water, immunization, healthy nutrition, and helping save children affected by malaria and HIV/AIDS. UNICEF also builds children's future by providing schools for education, and helps reduce child trafficking and violence. A few examples of the emergency relief it provides in addition to helping children in conflict are help to children affected by earthquakes, tsunamis, hurricanes, floods, and food crises.⁸²

The UNICEF helps children caught in conflict in Syria, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, and Mali.⁸³ In Syria, there are 2.8 million children who do not attend school, and one million children live as refugees. UNICEF helped mobilize the "largest humanitarian operation in history," which immunized more than 20 million children following the polio outbreak. It provides refugee children with "education, physical protection, psychological

⁸⁰<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/our-work/opac/>

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission>

⁸³Ibid.



support and winter clothes." It also provides 10 million people with safe drinking water.⁸⁴ During conflict, UNICEF "protects children from military conscription, works to stop trafficking and helps child soldiers reintegrate into their communities."⁸⁵ Throughout the Mali conflict, UNICEF responded by keeping necessary survival supplies flowing by truck, boat, and air shipments. In 2013, UNICEF worked with its partners in Mali, rehabilitated ex-soldiers and reunited them with their families.⁸⁶ In South Sudan, "50,000 children are likely to die" due to the conflict, even with UNICEF help.⁸⁷ In the Central African Republic, the UNICEF has "freed more than 1,000 child soldiers and is assisting displaced families with essential services including water, sanitation, education, malaria prevention and treatment for malnutrition."⁸⁸ Additionally, the UNICEF acts as a guide about the "optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict".⁸⁹ These requirements were highlighted above.

⁸⁴<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/conflict/syria>

⁸⁵<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/conflict>

⁸⁶<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/conflict/mali>

⁸⁷<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/conflict/south-sudan>

⁸⁸<http://www.unicefusa.org/mission/emergencies/conflict/central-african-republic>

⁸⁹http://www.unicef.org/sowc06/pdfs/option_protocol_conflict.pdf



III. Bloc Positions

Africa

When Sierra Leone ended its national disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program in December 2003, "72,500 former combatants have been demobilized, including 4,751 women (6.5 percent) and 6,787 children (9.4 percent), of who 506 are girls."⁹⁰ In 2012, the Kony 2012 video captured the headline of child soldiers in Africa.⁹¹ In Chad, Child Soldier International is working to "ensure that the government fulfills its commitment to protect children from involvement in armed conflict in state armed forces."⁹² In Uganda, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued arrest warrants for leaders in the LRA.⁹³ Although this is a step forward, the ICC does not have a police force to arrest them.

Asia

In Thailand, children at the age of fourteen have been used as child soldiers for the Barisan Revolusi Nasional Melayu Patani (BRN) fighting force.⁹⁴ Child Soldier International has conducted research in this area and it advocates ending the military recruitment of any person who is below the age of 18 by state or non-state actors. It has also put together a report to remind Thailand that they are a part of the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child (OPAC), which does not allow government or non-state armed groups to recruit or use children.⁹⁵ Additionally, the Women's League of Burma made recommendations to stop the use

⁹⁰http://www.peacewomen.org/portal_resources_resource.php?id=98

⁹¹<http://career.ucsd.edu/undergraduates/prepar-resume-covlet/index.html>

⁹²<http://www.child-soldiers.org/>

⁹³<http://www.cfr.org/human-rights/child-soldiers-around-world/p9331>

⁹⁴<http://www.child-soldiers.org/>

⁹⁵http://www.child-soldiers.org/research_report_reader.php?id=799



of child soldiers, especially women.⁹⁶ These include immediate nationwide ceasefire and begin "tripartite dialogue with the National League for Democracy,"⁹⁷ As a whole, Asia has stepped forward and signed the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women in the ASEAN Region. The Women's League of Burma also made recommendations for neighboring countries, such as Thailand, Bangladesh and India; which called for the allowance of refugee camps within their borders.

Europe

The European Union has taken measures collectively to help children affected in wars. Particularly, the Council Working Group on Human Rights (COHOM) provides that EU participation is required in some fields. Therefore, tactics the European Union has diverted to include political dialogue, public statements to encourage non-EU countries to "take effective action to protect children from the effects of armed conflict, to end the use of children in armed forces and groups and to end impunity." Additionally, the EU uses multilateral cooperation, crisis management operations, and training in child protection.⁹⁸

North America

In the United States, not a lot has been done to help child soldiers. One action human right activists at Human Rights Watch undertook was for the United States to stop sending aid to countries that allow for the usage of child soldiers. In 2008, the US Child Soldier Prevention Act prohibited the "US government from providing US foreign military financing, military training, and several other categories of US military assistance to governments using child soldiers."

⁹⁶http://www.peacewomen.org/portal_resources_resource.php?id=660

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/human_rights/human_rights_in_third_countries/r10113_en.htm



Some of the countries categorized as using child soldiers are Burma, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Somalia and Yemen.⁹⁹ Although this went into effect in 2010, the only countries today that do not receive US aid are Burma and Sudan.¹⁰⁰

South America

In Columbia, child soldiers are recruited by guerillas.¹⁰¹ The Columbian government released a "video confiscated during an army raid" that showed young kids training in the jungle. Natalia Springer, dean of the law school at Universidad Jorge Tadeo Lozano in Bogota and a political analyst, said that 18,000 children were forced to join guerillas between 2008 and 2012. She reported that Columbia faces a humanitarian emergency, although not a lot of help has been provided.¹⁰²

⁹⁹<http://www.hrw.org/news/2011/10/04/us-don-t-finance-child-soldiers>

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹<http://thecnnfreedomproject.blogs.cnn.com/2012/10/15/horrific-use-of-child-soldiers-rising-in-colombia-report-finds/>

¹⁰²Ibid.



IV. Questions to Consider

1. In what ways has the UNICEF helped, and in what ways could more work be done?
2. How are child soldiers best able to assimilate into their societies?
3. What is the most effective and efficient way for resolving this human rights violation?
4. Are there any organizations, besides the United Nations that was successful in ending child soldiers? If so, how can the UN learn from this organization?
5. Will eliminating the root cause of this problem, conflict within countries, eliminates the use of child soldiers? For example, what if a war end?



V. Suggested Sites

<http://www.unicef.org/> - The United Nations Children's Fund Site

<http://www.child-soldiers.org/> - Child Soldiers International Site

<https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/> - Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict

<http://www.un.org/sc/committees/WGCAAC/> - Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/68/878 - Children and Armed Conflict Report of the Secretary-General

<http://www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/children-and-conflict-en-315.pdf> - Disarmament Forum: Children and Conflict

http://www.hhri.org/thematic/child_soldiers.html - Health and Human Rights Info: Selected Links on Children in Armed Conflict



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