

Kai Vogel

Mrs. Kline

English II

18 May 2016

Child Soldiers and Conflicts

Around world today, there are over 300,000 child soldiers estimated to be fighting or working in conflicts, and about 40% of it is an armed force according to Unicef. In recent century, child soldiers' use in conflicts around the world has increased rapidly and become harsher in conditions. In this social injustice, many children are abducted and beaten to join the force, others join military groups to escape from poverty, for revenging against, to defend their communities, or for other reasons. This paper's purpose is to tell people over why, where, and how child soldiers are used, what effect it will have to the children, and what we must do in order to stop this social injustice; saving children in conflicts used by armed forces around the world.

According to United Nations, child soldiers are defined as "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". In many conflicts, children will take part in actual fight. However, their work is not only limited to fight in front lines, instead many will start out in supporting position. One of the common work assigned to children is to work as porters, which often carries heavy loads, like ammunition or injured soldiers. Some children also act as lookouts, messengers, cooks or other routine duties available. Girls will also be forced to serve as sexual slaves, or forced to marry with the member

from armed force. More recently, the use of children by terrorists, including the use of children as suicide bombers, has emerged as a huge problem in modern conflict, information according to Unicef.

This is a huge social injustice, because in many cases why use of child soldiers happen is that most of the government or terrorist groups that is ruling over people are thinking about children just as a puppet that will do anything they ordered to. In many areas that child soldiers are used, there are some people that cares about children and tries to help them escape, but it is very rare to succeed because of lack of resource, money, space to hide or secure children, and also terrorist groups or armed forces can just kill children if they try to escape.

Children were used in conflicts since human history has started to support adult soldiers or fighters. But after mid1900s children are started to be used as actual soldiers fighting along with adults to kill enemies in the front line. There are many reasons to this, and the largest reason is the change in weapons. In the past, children were not much effective as front line soldiers because most of the weapons were too heavy and needed many practice for them to manipulate. A child might have been able to wield a sword or a knife, but it was no match against a similarly armed adult. However today, children with an assault rifle can fight as much as the adult soldiers can fight in battle field. These weapons are also very simple to use, you don't need many special training to use the weapons. For example, the AK-47, which is the common rifle used in many conflicts today can be divided and reassembled by a kids of 10 years old says Tom Burrige. These rifles have become much cheaper and more widely available to buy around the world, having less moving parts, those rifles are very durable and have largely adopted in many conflicts.

Child soldiers will suffer even after they are freed. Children worked for or used by armed conflict can be injured, displaced from their communities, may become refugees, orphaned or separated from their parents and families, subjected to sexual abuse and exploitation, become traumatized as a result of being exposed to violence, blood and sound of fight, and lack of education, which will even affect the country heavily if one generation lacks education; information according to Unicef.

Today, ISIS is one of the major group that uses child soldiers. And ISIS uses child soldiers differently from what we ever had in conflicts before. Between January 2015 to the end of January 2016, deaths of child soldiers used by ISIS officially counted was 89 children according to BBC News, because this is an “official” count confirmed; the number of actual death are possibly to be few times more than it was confirmed. Most of the children are from Syria, but most were killed in Iraq, this can suggest you that ISIS gets children in Syria, but deploying them in the battlefield of the Iraq after they are trained some to fight. As for how they were used, about 40 percent of deaths were by using truck and car bombs, which children are often forced to drive into enemy military positions and other security targets as part of ISIS’ battle strategy. Around 30% were killed in battlefield operations while what they were doing is unknown, and 20% were killed while fighting enemy soldiers and 6 percent died while working in propaganda. And last 4% killed themselves while committing mass casualty attacks against civilians; according to BBC News.

In ISIS, children recruited as child soldiers go to place called "Cubs of the Islamic State" at there, they brainwash young recruits as a strategic move aiming at ensuring the longevity of ISIS by producing a willing and prepared next generation of jihadists on its own. As you think, this is pretty frightening because they are already creating the next generations of soldiers by

brainwashing children while they are young and making them to an ideal soldiers to ISIS already. In the camp, children will graduate after about 1 month teaching of the Qurans and teaching of ISIS, as well as how horrible America and European countries are. After they graduate, they are brought to the front line, but not fighting yet; they will be watching how adult soldiers kill enemies and to get used to blood and sounds of bomb, guns, and aircrafts. And at last when they are fully brain washed and used to battle fields; they will finally join the fight to kill enemy (Vinograd).

Another interesting thing in the case of ISIS is that the children are not being kidnapped like many cases happened in Africa. “For the most part, what we're seeing is kids posing with a big smile saying goodbye to the parents” says professor Bloom to CNN News. There are many reasons children will join ISIS. Parents bring their children to be used by ISIS while parents will also join to fight in it, to get out from the poverty, or children will come by themselves for revenging against other military groups, because other military groups fighting against ISIS is actually not much different from how horrible ISIS is. Also another thing ISIS does is that they will raise an orphan and recruit them. Children raised this way will be a very strong force for ISIS, because for them ISIS is their parents and they are much more royal to ISIS according to CNN News.

While ISIS recruits children as soldiers, many forces against ISIS are also recruiting child soldiers as well. And they are also as bad as how ISIS acts and treats children, so you cannot simply say that the people joining ISIS is evil, because there are also many people hurt by them and trying to fight back against them by joining ISIS. (Longman)

In conclusion, child soldiers were used around the world since human history has started, but in this recent century, rifles and guns have made children able to fight alongside the adults,

as well as using children as suicide bombers, forcing children to be in the front lines shooting enemy. But children have no sin, and in order to prevent child soldiers to be used is to have the right government that takes control over armed forces and terrorists, and what is important to create that is education. Because one problem that these countries having conflicts is the lack of education; if there was an educational system that covers all children in these poor country, they can get out from the fight and mess of war faster making harder background for having new terrorists and armed forces born. You do not need to volunteer or anything, but what you can do is to donate some money to help organizations making schools in countries with or after conflicts. Just be careful and donate to trustful organization that actually use your donated money wisely.

Works Cited

- Burridge, Tom. "Child soldiers still being recruited in South Sudan." bbc.com. BBC News, 27 Oct. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- "Child Recruitment and Use." childrenandarmedconflict.un.org. United Nations, n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- "Children as soldiers." unicef.org. N.p., n.d. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- "Isis is using far more child soldiers than the world realised." independent.co.uk. Independent, 19 Feb. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- "Iraq's Child Soldiers." usnews.com. U.S.News, 21 Aug. 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- Longman, James. "IS increases use of child soldiers, says US report." bbc.com. BBC News, 18 Feb. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- McLaughlin, Erin. "How ISIS recruits children, then kills them." cnn.com. CNN, 22 Feb. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- "South Sudan: Terrifying Lives of Child Soldiers." hwr.org. Human Rights Watch, 14 Dec. 2015. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- Townsend, Mark. "How Islamic State is training child killers in doctrine of hate." theguardian.com. Guardian News, 5 Mar. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.
- Vinograd, Cassandra. "ISIS Trains Child Soldiers at Camps for 'Cubs of the Islamic State.'" nbcnews.com. NBC News, 14 Apr. 2016. Web. 23 Apr. 2016.