How Definitions of 'Child Soldiers' Exclude Girls from Demobilisation Efforts

Dr Ally Dunhill and Dr Alicia Kidd

Introduction

Historically, children have been used by states' military forces and armed groups during times of conflict in mostly supportive roles (Embacher et al. 2013). Currently, children in these situations are often referred to as 'child soldiers' and are used in increasing numbers by armed forces and groups in both supportive and combatant roles (United Nations (UN) Security Council 2015). According to Honwana (2006) and Singer (2006), this is largely due to the development and availability of small, light weapons that children can carry and use easily. While it is difficult to ascertain accurate numbers of 'child soldiers', an estimated 250,000 to 300,000 children and adolescents are involved in armed forces or armed groups around the globe (International Organization for Migration (IOM) 2019), and at least 46 states continue to recruit children under the age of 18 into their armed forces (*Ibid.*). This has become a major concern across the world. The UN (2015), through Sustainable Development Goal 8 (SDG8), has called on states to "eradicate [the] recruitment and use of child soldiers . . . by 2025."

This chapter explores the treatment of children once they have left armed forces and armed groups by focusing on how the remit and outcomes of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes affect these children. The chapter provides an exploration of how girls are overlooked in definitions of 'child soldiers' and highlights the harmful consequences of this. Using examples of DDR programmes, we analyse how children are identified and recruited into such initiatives. We contemplate whether children's experiences as being part of armed forces (belonging to a state) and armed groups (not under the clear control of a state authority) are adequately considered, and whether the gendered treatment in these programmes is conducive to long term recovery and reintegration into civilian communities. Building on existing literature on female 'child soldiers', the chapter highlights the requirement for further research and concludes with recommendations for more effective and inclusive efforts for female children associated with armed forces or armed groups.

Definitions

The term 'child soldiers' is commonly used by agencies working with children in this context (Wessells 2019). However, there is disagreement over the appropriateness of the term. The United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) Paris Principles (guidelines for realisation and implementation) and Paris Commitments (political agreement), were adopted in 2007 by UNICEF and States attending the 'Free Children from War' conference organised by France and UNICEF (France Diplomatie 2017). According to UNICEF (2017), 105 countries have endorsed the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments. The objectives of the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments are:

> "[preventing] the recruitment of children . . . gaining the release of children who have been recruited . . . trying to bring legal sanctions against those responsible for

> recruiting children . . . and making efforts for effective reintegration programmes for children who have been participants in conflict" (Burchill 2019, no pagination).

Rather than using the term 'child soldiers', the *Paris Principles and Paris Commitments* (UNICEF 2007) use 'children associated with armed forces or armed groups.' According to research by Wessells (2019, 11), the labelling of children as 'child soldiers' focuses on the negative experiences of the child and "can increase stigma and social isolation." From this perspective, the use of such a term can invalidate the child as equally having the right to protection and to participate in all discussions and decisions that will impact them, as is stated in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (UN 1989). Moreover, notions of 'child soldiers' are often used synonymously with frontline combatants. This is a limited understanding and overlooks a large proportion of children associated with armed forces and armed groups who are not recruited to fight. A generally accepted definition of 'child soldiers' that does not limit inclusion in this way is:

> "any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers, and those accompanying such groups, other than purely as family members. It includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms" (UNICEF 1997, 1).

It is this, inclusive, definition of 'child soldiers' that we acknowledge throughout this chapter, ensuring that all children associated with armed forces or armed groups, regardless of the role they play, are recognised as being in need of support. However, it must be recognised that in practice, regardless of this generally-accepted definition, the term 'child soldiers' is commonly used purely in reference to child combatants. Further attention is paid to this problem in Recommendation One below.

It is also important to note here that the definition above includes all children regardless of whether they were abducted and forced to join the armed forces or armed groups or whether they 'volunteered'. In the majority of cases, children are abducted and forcibly recruited (ICRC 2016; Becker 2017). This often leads them to be understood with a sense of "innocence and passivity" (Wells 2015, 181) whereby they had no agency over their situation. However, children "complicate . . . conceptions of childhood" (Wells, 2015, 181) when they 'volunteer' into armed forces or armed groups. According to Wells, children volunteer:

> "to escape poverty, to secure protection, to enact revenge and for political or ideological reasons . . . War increases the likelihood of children being separated from their parents and this makes them vulnerable to abduction, but can also make the army seem like a safe space; in a situation of conflict children argue (not unreasonably) that it is better to be a soldier with a gun than a civilian being threatened by a soldier with a gun" (2015, 170).

While some children may indeed 'volunteer', it is important to consider the context in which they make such choices. Living in an area in which conflict is rife and resources are scarce, choosing to join a group with power and which will offer food, shelter and accommodation may seem like a good decision. However, agency in this sense is constrained by the conflict;

it is not an autonomous choice, but one limited by a lack of legitimate options (see Wells 2015, 2-3). Importantly, if the victim is under 18, the method through which they are trafficked is irrelevant in meeting the definition of trafficking, as is the case for 'child soldiers'. As such, regardless of their method of recruitment, 'child soldiers' should not be understood as willing, active participants in armed conflict, but as victims of human trafficking. According to the Palermo Protocol:

> "'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery, servitude, or the removal of organs" (UN General Assembly 2000, 2).

To summarise, the term 'child soldiers' refers to anyone under age 18 who plays any role in an armed force or armed group. This is regardless of whether they have a weapon, and regardless of the reasons they joined. They should be recognised as victims of human trafficking as opposed to voluntary contributors to violence.

Female 'Child Soldiers'

The majority of 'child soldiers' are boys; however, girls constitute a significant proportion (Machel 2001; Olsson and Aubert 2018). According to Becker (2017, 113), "in some conflicts, girls make up 30% or more of children recruited into armed groups or forces." However, much of the literature focuses on the experience of boys, and little attention has been paid to the roles and experiences of girls (Mazurana et al. 2002). A report published in 2002 (Mazurana et al.) stated that between 1990 and 2002, girls were present in fighting forces and groups in 54 countries, and their numbers are significant. Therefore, it is questionable as to why they have been so overlooked in the literature. According to Denov (2007, ii) "whether in the heat of conflict or within post-war programming, girls are, for the most part, rendered invisible and marginalized."

Whether they choose to join or are abducted, girls are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse (UN Security Council 2015). According to Wells (2015, 174), research on female 'child soldiers' has identified that "almost all girls associated with fighting forces in any way – regardless of whether or not they volunteered – report wide-spread sexual violence." Yet the role that children play in a fighting force or group is not always influenced by gender. Thompson exemplifies Liberia and Uganda where most girls were victims of sexual violence, and most boys were used as fighters, but some girls were combatants and some boys were held in sexual servitude (Thompson 1999).

While a significant proportion of the literature on female 'child soldiers' focuses on their roles as 'wives' and their experiences of being sexually exploited by armed forces or armed groups (David 1998; Mazurana et al. 2002; Watchlist 2003; McKay and Mazurana 2004), there is also plenty of evidence that they undertake other roles, including as combatants, porters and cooks (Thompson 1999; McKay and Mazurana 2004; Becker 2017). Often, girls will play more than one role, acting as both fighter and 'wife,' for example. To

refer back to the definition, any child under 18 who is part of an armed force or armed group in any capacity is a 'child soldier'. As such, no child associated with armed forces or armed groups should be disregarded as a 'child soldier' based on their gender or the role they undertake.

Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) Programmes

DDR programmes exist to encourage soldiers to give up their weapons, to take them out of service, and to resettle them into civilian society. "Formal demobilization, including for child soldiers, usually follows a peace agreement . . . Informal occasions include instances where child soldiers escape from or are released by their armed group" (Verhey 2001, 6).

DDR programmes aim to create stability, re-establish security and create the conditions needed for peace. They are aimed at everyone who was involved in armed forces or armed groups, regardless of their role (UNDDR 2019). While the services available in each DDR programme will differ, according to the UN Integrated DDR Standards, all programmes should follow five general principles. They should be: people-centred; flexible, accountable and transparent; nationally owned; integrated; and well planned (Bowd and Özredem 2003, 456). There is also an expectation that DDR programmes "will prevent further conflict by effectively reintegrating former soldiers into civilian life" (Wells 2015, 180).

While the disarmament and demobilisation aspects of DDR programmes are somewhat self-explanatory, the reintegration of former soldiers is a much more nuanced part of the process, and successful reintegration is problematic to assess. Child reintegration refers to "the process through which children transition into civil society and enter meaningful roles and identities as civilians who are accepted by their families and communities in a context of local and national reconciliation" (UNICEF 2007, 7).

Of course, what is considered 'meaningful' is open to interpretation, and any form of reintegration after an experience as a 'child soldier' is going to have barriers, especially when they are an afterthought in the DDR process. According to Wells (2015, 180), "in the mid-1990s in its first attempt to resolve the conflict in Sierra Leone, the UN made US $34 million available for disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating soldiers; less than $1 million of this was for child soldiers". Bowd and Özredem (2003, 455) have identified five obstacles to successful reintegration: a lack of confidence and trust, a share in natural resources, access to employment opportunities and land, risk of being involved in criminal activities, and the community's perception of mistrust and insecurity. Further, Newman (2014), identifies some of the consequences when reintegration fails: children are prone to neglect and abuse, they are isolated, and they risk passing these challenges onto the next generation. It is important then that DDR programmes consider these potential barriers in order to ensure the outcomes of the programmes are successful and do not contribute to an endless cycle of struggle that is passed on through the generations (for further information on the impact on future generations, see Newman 2014).

Girls in DDR Programmes

Gender-Specific Needs

Being in an armed force or armed group has physical and psychological effects on 'child

soldiers'. Their gender, background, role and duties in the armed forces or armed groups, and the force that they were associated with, will all impact upon their experiences, affecting each child differently. Girls are recruited by armed forces and armed groups to undertake numerous roles. However, many suffer sexual exploitation or are taken as 'wives' to commanders (David 1998; Mazurana et al. 2002; Watchlist 2003; McKay and Mazurana 2004). Therefore, their physical and psychological needs post-conflict are different from boys. Girls who were released or escaped from armed forces or armed groups will have experienced a range of gender and age-related mistreatments. These include:

- The physical and psychological impacts of rape. "In the aftermath of sexual assault, girls experience shock, loss of dignity, shame, low self-esteem, poor concentration and memory, persistent nightmares, depression, and other posttraumatic stress effects" (Mazurana et al. 2002, 115). After sexual assault, girls have been shown to withdraw, while boys respond with aggression (*Ibid.*).
- Having a higher risk of pregnancies, STIs and complications in childbirth (McKay 1998).
- If a girl does become pregnant, she is likely to have no say over whether to keep the baby. She may experience a forced (or 'voluntary') abortion or may have to birth a child which she may deem a constant reminder of her abuse (Peters 2005). Alternatively, she may love and care for the child, but caring for and feeding a baby as a 'child soldier' always on the move, when the mother is likely to be malnourished herself, is a problem in itself (World Health Organisation 2009).
- Having to deal with menstruation. While many 'child soldiers' will suffer malnutrition, this has a specific impact on girls when they become so malnourished that their menses stop (United Nations Population Fund 2019).

The Oversight of Female 'Child Soldiers' by DDR Programmes

UNICEF and NGOs (non-governmental organisations) have established rehabilitation programmes in many countries to provide former 'child soldiers' with medical care and counselling, assist them in locating their families, and provide education or vocational training. But many former 'child soldiers' never benefit from this assistance, while others need more help than the programmes are able to provide (Becker 2017, 113).

UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 (UN Security Council 2000) and 1820 (UN Security Council 2008) specifically include girls and call for their protection and participation in peace processes. Additionally, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (IOM 2019), affirms that "States shall demobilize children under the age of 18 recruited or used in hostilities and provide physical and psychological recovery services and assist their social reintegration." However, this has not been the case. Girls have been almost 'invisible' as they have not been considered when the DDR programmes have been planned (Denov 2007; Salah 2005). According to the Democratic Progress Institute (2015) and Dharmapuri (2017), girls and women are overlooked due to 'gender blindness', where the design focus of the DDR programmes is on male combatants; the role that females play within armed forces or armed groups is often regarded as non-threatening to the peace process. Those girls that do enter DDR programmes often report poor conditions and situations that were clearly not developed with girls in mind. For example, housing girls who were sexually exploited as part of their 'child soldier' experience in centres with a predominantly adult male population is not conducive to an atmosphere of safety and trust. Housing children and adults together

also fails to separate demobilised 'child soldiers' from military authority and puts children, regardless of gender, at risk of retribution, re-recruitment or further abuse (Verhey 2001).

For over a decade, professionals working in conflict areas have been raising concerns regarding the low number of DDR programmes being accessed by girls (Olsson and Aubert 2018). Research carried out in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2016, based on interviews with 150 former female 'child soldiers', found that most girls leave or escape armed forces and armed groups by themselves and therefore do not participate in any DDR programmes (Child Soldiers International 2016). Below, we outline a range of reasons why girls are excluded from DDR programmes—both by the programmes and of the girls' own accord.

Girls are Often Not a Priority for DDR Programmes

"Armed, adult male fighters [were] the near exclusive priority for most [DDR] programs, significantly marginalizing all children, but girls in particular" (Mazurana et al. 2002, 116). According to Wells (2015, 180), DDR programmes continue to "marginalize ex-combatants - girls and young children - who are not seen as a security threat." In her research, Wells (2015) identified that boys were more likely to be on a DDR programme than girls. She found that in the DRC "only 23 girls as compared to 1,718 boys were demobilized by four international NGOs" (2015, 162). However, according to McKay (2006) (cited in Wells 2015), the number of girls and boys recruited or abducted into the armed forces and armed groups were comparable. This point supports Denov's (2007) comment that girls have been 'invisible or marginalised' not only as 'child soldiers' but within DDR programmes. The numbers of girls recruited into armed forces and armed groups and the roles they play is not proportionate or comparable to the number of opportunities they have to access DDR programmes. Therefore, it can be assumed that girls are not a priority for DDR programmes.

McKay and Mazurana (2004) exemplify a DDR programme established in Sierra Leone in 1999. One of the requirements for acceptance into the programme was to answer a number of questions on how to assemble and disassemble a gun. While, officially, knowledge or possession of arms was not required for a child (under 18) to be accepted into the programme, there was much discrepancy in reports as to whether or not this was the case. The confusion surrounding this meant that many girls believed they were ineligible because they did not have a weapon. This clearly has a fundamental impact on eligibility for those who were members of the armed forces or armed groups but acting in auxiliary roles and therefore did not hold, or have knowledge on how to use, a weapon.

Female 'Child Soldiers' Who Become Child Mothers

Female 'child soldiers' who become mothers are often marginalised (Burman and McKay 2007). Newman (2014) undertook research with Ugandan child mothers who had returned to civilian communities after being abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army to be 'child soldiers'. However, of those girls that passed through formal reception centres after leaving the armed forces, none were provided with counselling, despite their high rates of trauma and the fact that they were children who had borne children and, therefore, victims of rape. While these girls stated that they wanted an education, they were unable to access one because they had to prioritise the needs of their own children, leaving them without the time, money or opportunity to be able to receive this education. Newman describes how some of these girls were not registered as ex-combatants, but rather as child-mothers, meaning that their experiences as 'child soldiers' were ignored.

If given the option, children may be reluctant to leave the armed forces or armed groups for various reasons. One of the main reasons being having no family to return to (often as a result of war), or not knowing the location of their family. Many fear rejection from their communities after being 'child soldiers'. "Their families and home communities may be unwilling to accept them, particularly if they committed atrocities" (Becker 2017, 113, also discussed by Verhey 2001; UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2005).

Making Female 'Child Soldiers' Invisible

Armed forces do not want there to be any evidence of them having used girls in their fighting forces (McKay and Mazurana 2004), which is another reason for their exclusion from DDR programmes. Further, armed groups often "consider the females in their ranks property rather than combatants" and these groups then do not admit to having them in their group (Olsson and Aubert 2018, 3). It is clear then that there are many reasons as to why female 'child soldiers' may not partake in DDR programmes. Exclusion may be on the part of the DDR programme, but there is also the possibility that girls choose not to partake in these programmes. As such, echoing McKay and Mazurana (2004), a level of support needs to be built into communities to ensure that there is some degree of care provided to girls returning to them, even if they bypass DDR programmes for any reason. The rejection of girls and women during DDR programmes is documented in the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2005) World Youth Report which emphasises how this rejection leads to a lack of physical, economic and emotional support once the conflict has ended. They are left with limited options, which pushes many to remain with their captors, pushed into early marriage or prostitution, or vulnerable to the offers of traffickers. As such, a lack of support after demobilisation locks many girls into an inescapable cycle of exploitation.

Returning to the Community

According to Olsson and Aubert (2018, 2), when former female 'child soldiers' in the DRC were interviewed about their experiences, "it was not the hunger, rape or other horrific experiences of being part of an armed group that caused the most distress to the girls, but the reactions they faced when they got home." Therefore, for these children, the impact of war does not end in their recruitment to the armed forces or groups, but continues for the rest of their lives as their pre-war societal connections break down.

"For girl soldiers, return to their home communities is particularly difficult because they suffer additional stigma due to presumed sexual exploitation and may have young children to support" (Becker 2017, 113; see also Kiconco 2019). Some families do not believe that the child was forced into a relationship and consider her a traitor (Newman 2014). This is especially the case if the girl has given birth to children fathered by commanders—children that the family may refuse to accept as related (Mazurana et al. 2002; McKay and Mazurana 2004). In fact, the experiences of girls on return to their families can be so extreme that "in many cases it is easier for a boy to be accepted after amputating the hands of villagers than it is for a girl to be accepted after being the victim of rape" (Shepler 2002, quoted in McKay and Mazurana 2004, 37).

According to Wessells (2019), young mothers who had children while with the armed forces or armed groups reported that they were under constant scrutiny by their community when they returned. These mothers may still be children themselves, but many say that once they have returned, they have no one to look after them and are considered a burden to

relatives. “Economically, women are often forced into poorly paid and unprotected work, or into domestic duties, during and after conflicts. This reinforces perceptions of dependence on males” (Ziebell and Goetz 2003, no pagination). If female ‘child soldiers’ are returning to families that reject them, then they have no one on whom to depend. If there is a culture of dependence on males, this then leaves them with little option but to return to the men who were exploiting them.

Furthermore, “[f]or some girls, belonging to an illegal armed group gives them a sense of power and control that they may not otherwise experience living in a relatively conservative, 'machista' society” (Care International 2008, 24). This means that returning to civilian communities could feel like a backwards step to girls who lose this sense of power and are socialised into relying on men (War Child 2019). Similarly, because female ‘child soldiers’’ roles in armed forces and armed groups are so varied, they are considered highly valuable by such groups and are less likely to be released (*Ibid*.). This suggests that it can be difficult for girls to reintegrate into civilian life, where they are often not valued to the same degree, with society dictating that they should rely on men. If their community has rejected them, they are likely to move elsewhere in search of work. With a lack of education and assistance, they can become vulnerable to exploitative offers or, with an absence of alternative options, their only option may be to return to the commanders who were exploiting them (The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) 2015).

Recommendations

We have provided a range of examples of, and reasons why female ‘child soldiers’ are not adequately considered and provided for in DDR programmes. Below, we provide four recommendations for the development of more effective and inclusive efforts going forwards to better assist girls who have been trafficked for use as ‘child soldiers’. These recommendations would assist in achieving SDG8 (UN 2015).

Recommendation One

The way in which children are labelled as ‘child soldiers’ has negative connotations, works contrary to the CRC, and leads to the exclusion of non-fighting children from DDR programmes. When girls predominantly take on non-fighting roles, this can mean that they are disproportionately omitted when DDR programmes are being planned or that they are rejected from attending the programmes. As stated previously, the term ‘child soldiers’ can escalate “stigma and social isolation” (Wessells 2019, 11). While the term technically includes all children associated with armed forces or groups, regardless of their role, it is often misconstrued to represent only children in fighting roles. Many ‘child soldiers’—particularly girls—undertake auxiliary roles in armed forces or armed groups, whereby they may not have access to or training in how to use a weapon. The term ‘children associated with armed forces or armed groups’ (UNICEF 2007), is less ambiguous than ‘child soldiers’. Acknowledging this inclusive definition of ‘child soldiers’, knowledge or possession of arms should not be a requirement to determine eligibility into DDR programmes. Although the term itself is long to use in practice, it should be adopted by all organisations to ensure the focus is on the child, not the ‘soldier’.

Recommendation Two

Every child associated with armed forces or armed groups has unique experiences, depending on their gender and the role they play. Each child should be supported based on his or her particular needs rather than on an understanding of the experiences of 'child soldiers' as presented by adults. Expanding on this, Western notions of childhood may not be suitable to implement on children who have been associated with armed forces or armed groups. Western notions of childhood are historically and culturally specific and are socially constructed (James et al. 2007). Western children are often seen as dependent on adults with no, or very few, responsibilities or duties (Montgomery 2018). However, children from non-western cultures are expected to undertake responsibilities and duties from an early age (Ansell 2017). In view of such differences, former children associated with armed forces or armed groups should be consulted in the development of DDR programmes in order to understand the perspectives of the complex experiences of children from different cultures. This would contribute towards aligning with Article 12 of the CRC (UN 1989): the right of the child to be heard. This level of participation by children could lead to more worthwhile, meaningful and effective DDR programmes for girls.

Recommendation Three

Even with the best efforts of DDR programmes to recruit girls, there will always be some that bypass these programmes for any number of reasons. As advocated by McKay and Mazurana (2004), a level of support needs to be built into the communities that these girls will return to. This includes medical support that may evidently be required, but also financial and psychological support to enable them to restart their lives after having been exploited as victims of trafficking. Receiving support in their communities may also help to tackle some of the ongoing problems facing returnee girls who must support themselves (and often their children born due to their trafficking experience) in a time of post-conflict which often equates to insecurity and a lack of economic opportunities.

Recommendation Four

DDR programmes should recognise that females are part of armed forces and armed groups and should not be excluded from support simply because of their gender. However, the specific needs of girls and women must be recognised within the programmes in order to make them safe and helpful to females. According to Wessells (2019, 5), "By not addressing sexual violence and its distinctive stigma directly, reintegration programmes quietly discriminate against girls and women." Organisers should acknowledge the specific medical, physical and psychological needs of girls who have been exploited as 'child soldiers'. While some of these needs may be similar to the needs of boys, there are gender-specific requirements that are important for girls, including access to menstrual products. Equally, the impact of sexual assault will play out differently, and attention must be paid to the risks of STIs, pregnancies, births and abortions. In addition to the recommendations regarding practice, we hope that this chapter will bring about further research on the experiences of female children associated with armed forces or armed groups and lead to DDR programmes that meet their specific needs.

Conclusion

Governments continue to fail to protect their children from recruitment into armed forces and armed groups, yet simultaneously overlook the experiences of large proportions of those

who were exploited by these forces—predominantly girls. In failing to prevent these children being trafficked into becoming 'child soldiers', they are allowing them to be abused for a significant proportion of time; the time in which they will also be developing most rapidly both physically and psychologically. This failure, coupled with the failure to identify female children associated with armed forces or armed groups and offer them the necessary support they need as part of DDR programmes, means that governments are complicit in the continued exploitation of girls over time. This spans from their recruitment into the armed force or armed group, to the lack of support received on demobilisation. The lack of support leads to poverty and insecurity which, in turn, has the potential to increase the risk of girls becoming victims of human trafficking. This failure of governments then makes girls vulnerable to entering a continuous and inescapable cycle of exploitation.

References

Ansell, Nicola. 2017. Children, Youth and Development. 2nd Edn. Abingdon: Routledge.

Becker, Jo. 2017. *Campaigning for Children. Strategies for Advancing Children's Rights*. California: Stanford University Press.

Bowd, Richard. and Alpaslan Özerdem. 2013. "How to Assess Social Reintegration of Ex-Combatants." *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* vol 7, 4: 453-475. https://doi.org/10.1080/17502977.2012.727537.

Burchill, Richard. 2019. "Protecting Children in Armed Conflict." Insight, TRENDS Research Advisory. April 17, 2019. http://trendsinstitution.org/protecting-children-in-armed-conflict/

Burman, Mary and Susan McKay. 2007. "Marginalization of girl mothers during reintegration from armed groups in Sierra Leone". *International Nursing Review,* vol 54 no. 4:316-23. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1466-7657.2007.00546.x

Care International. 2008. *Overcoming Lost Childhoods - Lessons Learned from the Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Former Child Soldiers in Colombia.* London: Care International.

Child Soldiers International. 2016. "What the Girls Say: Improving Practices for the Demobilization and Reintegration of Girls in DRC." https://www.child-soldiers.org/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=e57e9cb2-cd70-4dc2-8681-e29bc6f3622b

David, Kelly. 1998. *The Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration of child soldiers in Liberia. 1994-1997. The process and lessons learned.* New York: UNICEF.

Democratic Progress Institute. 2015. *DDR and Former Female Combatants.* London: Democratic Progress Institute.

Denov, Myriam. 2007. *Girls in Fighting Forces: Moving Beyond Victimhood*. Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). https://gsdrc.org/document-library/girls-in-fighting-forces-moving-beyond-victimhood/

Dharmapuri, Sahana. 2017. "Back to basics: Gender blindness negativity impacts security." Our Secure Future. https://oursecurefuture.org/blog/back-basics-gender-blindness-negatively-impacts-security

Embacher, Helga, Gratzia Prontera, Albert Lichblau, Johannes-Dieter Steinert, Wolfgang Aschauer, Darek Galasinki, and John Buckley. (eds). 2013. *Children and War.* Solihull: Helion & Company.

France Diplomatie. 2017. "What are the Paris Principles and Paris Commitments?" https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/french-foreign-policy/human-rights/children-s-

rights/protecting-children-from-war-conference-21-february-2017/article/what-are-the-paris-principles-and-paris-commitments

Honwana, Alcinda. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

ICRC. 2016. "Customary IHL. Rule 136 Recruitment of Child Soldiers." https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/customary-ihl/eng/docs/v1_cha_chapter39

IOM. 2019. "Spotlight: recruitment of children and adolescents: retention as slow violence." February-March 2019. https://repository.oim.org.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.11788/2177/33.%20RPR%20Spotlight%20Recruitment%20of%20CHAY_Feb-Mar2019.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

James, Allison, Chris Jenks and Alan Prout. 2007. Theorizing Childhood. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Kiconco, Allen. 2019. "Speaking about violence in Sierra Leone". *Beyond Slavery and Trafficking, OpenDemocracy June* 26, 2019. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/speaking-about-violence-sierra-leone/

Machel, Gracia. 2001. *The Impact of War on Children*. London: Hurst & Co.

Mazurana, Dyan, Susan McKay, Khristopher Carlson and Janel Kasper. 2002. "Girls in fighting forces and groups: their recruitment, participation, demobilization, and reintegration." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology,* vol 8, no. 2: 97-123. http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15327949pac1003_8

McKay, Susan. 1998. "The effects of armed conflict on girls and women." *Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology, vol* 4, no. 4: 381–392. DOI: 10.1207/s15327949pac0404_6

McKay, Susan. 2006. "The inversion of girlhood: girl combatants during and after armed conflict." In *A World Turned Upside Down: The Social Ecologies of Children in Armed Conflict*. Edited by Niel Boothby, Allison Strang and Michael Wessells, 89-109. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

McKay, Susan and Dyan Mazurana. 2004. *Where are the girls? Girls in fighting forces in northern Uganda, Sierra Leone and Mozambique: their lives during and after war.* Montreal: International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development.

Montgomery, Heather. 2018. *Children's rights and cultural relativism*. Bristol: Policy Press.

MONUSCO. 2015. "Invisible survivors. Girls in armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo. From 2009-2015." https://childrenandarmedconflict.un.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/151123-Girls-in-Armed-Groups-2009-2015-Final.pdf

Newman, Carter. 2014. “No one to stand by us: reintegrating formerly abducted child-mothers in Uganda.” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding,* vol 8, no. 4: 357-380. DOI:10.1080/17502977.2014.964450

Olsson, Sandra and Veronique Aubert. 2018. “Reintegrating Returned Girl Soldiers in the DRC. Africa Programme Meeting Summary.” January 25, 2018. London: Chatham House. https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/reintegrating-returned-girl-soldiers-drc

Peters, Lilian. 2005. “Was is No Child’s Play: Child Soldiers from Battlefield to Playground.” Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

Salah, Rima. 2005. “The Impact of Conflict on Women and Girls in West and Central Africa and the UNICEF Response.” UNICEF.

Shepler, Susan. 2002. Les filles-soldats: Trajectoires d’après-guerre en Sierra Leone [Girl soldiers: Post-war trajectories in Sierra Leone] *Politique Africaine.* vol 4, no. 88: 49-62. https://doi.org/10.3917/polaf.088.0049

Singer, Peter Warren. 2006. *Children at War*. Berkley: University of California Press.

Thompson, Carol B. 1999. “Beyond civil society: Child soldiers as citizens in Mozambique.” *Review of African Political Economy*, vol 26, no. 80: 191–206.https://www.jstor.org/stable/4006559?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents

UN. 1989. “The Convention on the Rights of the Child.” https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx

UN. 2015. Sustainable Development Goals. https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs

UNDDR. 2019. What is DDR? http://www.unddr.org/what-is-ddr/introduction_1.aspx

UN. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. 2005. World youth report: young people today and in 2015. July 30, 2005, ST/ESA/301. New York: United Nations.

UN General Assembly. 2000. Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children, supplementing the UN convention against transnational organized crime (15 November 2000, Res 55/25). http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/ProtocolTraffickingInPersons.aspx

UNICEF. 1997. “Cape Town annotated principles and best practices.” Cape Town, April 30, 1997. South Africa: UNICEF.

UNICEF. 2007. “The Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups.” https://www.unicef.org/emerg/files/ParisPrinciples310107English.pdf

UNICEF. 2017. “At least 65,000 children released from armed forces and groups over the last 10 years, UNICEF.” Press Release, 20 February 2017. https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/least-65000-children-released-armed-forces-and-groups-over-last-10-years-unicef

United Nations Population Fund. 2019. “Menstruation and human rights - Frequently asked questions.” https://www.unfpa.org/menstruationfaq

UN. Security Council. 2000. S/RES/1325. https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/720/18/pdf/N0072018.pdf?OpenElement

UN. Security Council. 2008. Women and peace and security. S/RES/1820 (2008) https://www.un.org/ruleoflaw/files/women_peace_security_resolution1820.pdf

UN. Security Council. 2015. Resolution 2225. S/RES/2225(2015). https://undocs.org/S/RES/2225(2015)

Verhey, Beth. 2001. “Child soldiers: preventing, demobilizing and reintegrating.” *Africa Region Working Paper Series,* 23, 1-31. http://web.worldbank.org/archive/website00523/WEB/PDF/CHILD_SO.PDF

War Child. 2019. *Rethink child soldiers. A new approach to the integration of all children associated with armed forces and groups*. London: War Child.

Watchlist. 2003. *The impact of armed conflict on children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. New York: Watchlist.

Wells, Karen. 2015. *Childhood in a Global Perspective*. 2nd Edn. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Wessells, Michael. 2019. “Do No Harm: How Reintegration Programmes for Former Child Soldiers Can Cause Unintended Harm.” In *Research Handbook on Child Soldiers* edited by Mark A. Drumbl and Jastine C. Barrett. Washington: Edward Elgar Publishing. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3350564

World Health Organisation. 2009. “Healing child soldiers.” Bulletin of the World Health Organization, Volume 87:5, 325-404. https://www.who.int/bulletin/volumes/87/5/09-020509/en/

Ziebell, Stephanie and Anne Marie Goetz. 2003. “Gender-aware Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR): A Checklist.” New York: UNIFEM.