



# Human Trafficking: An Explanation of Child Soldiers

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## What Is Human Trafficking?

*The recruitment, harboring, transport, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services through the use of force, fraud, or coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery. The victim need not be transported in order for the crime to fall within this definition.*

### Stats:

- Estimated 27 million human trafficking victims worldwide
- FBI estimates this is a 32 billion dollar a year industry (2<sup>nd</sup> most profitable criminal enterprise)

## What Is Child Soldiery?

*Child soldiers are persons under 18 years who both directly and indirectly participate in armed conflict. Child soldiery can be a manifestation of human trafficking where it involves the unlawful recruitment or use of children (through force, fraud, or coercion) as combatants, for labor, or for sexual exploitation by armed forces.*

## How Children Become Soldiers:

Perpetrators may be government forces, paramilitary organizations, or rebel groups. Many children are forcibly abducted to be used as combatants. Others are made to work as porters, cooks, guards, servants, messengers, or spies. Young girls can be forced to marry or have sex with male combatants.

## *Have you heard of Kony 2012?*



*(Image courtesy of Invisible Children)*

### Driving forces include :

- **Hunger and poverty**
  - Provides access to food and shelter
- **Protection in violent regions**
  - Access to weaponry and protection
- **Children are impressionable**
  - Children are more impressionable to ideologies

### Stats:

- The UN estimates there are 300,000 child soldiers today
- Ages range from about 7 to 18
- Most soldiers less than 15 are in non-governmental military organizations
- Both male and female child soldiers are often sexually abused and are high risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases



**Countries using child soldiers in combat (1998-2001)**

*(Image courtesy of US Army War College)*

## Combating Child Soldiery:

### *Anti-Child Soldiery Legislation:*

#### **Convention on rights of child (1989)**

- Ensures protection and care of children who are affected by armed conflict

#### **Rome Statute (1998)**

- Conscription, enlistment, or use of children under 15 in armed conflict by national armed forces or armed groups is a war crime

#### **ILO Convention (1999)**

- Prohibits the forced/compulsory recruitment of children under 18 in armed conflict

#### **Optional Protocol (2000)**

- Minimum age for voluntary recruitment is 16
- Countries must provide technical cooperation and financial assistance to help prevent child soldier recruitment
- Countries must improve the rehabilitation and reintegration of former child soldiers

### *Activism and Education:*

- New Abolitionist Movement
- Abolition Ohio
- Child Soldiers International
- Amnesty International

### References:

- “Children and Armed Conflict: Report of the Secretary-General.” *United Nations*. N.p., July 2000. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.
- “Fact Sheet: Child Soldiers.” *UNICEF*. N.p., n.d. Web. 1 Apr. 2012.
- Talbott, Anthony. “Human Trafficking: Definition and Scope.” University of Dayton. Jan. 2012. Lecture.