



**GRACE,
MILLY, LUCY...
CHILD
SOLDIERS**
A FILM BY
RAYMONDE PROVENCHER

GRACE, MILLY, LUCY... CHILD SOLDIERS

Director: Raymonde Provencher
2010 | 72 min 53 s

ABOUT THE FILM

In Uganda, more than 30,000 children have been abducted by rebel troops over the past 20 years and forced into armed conflict. Many of these child soldiers are girls. *Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers* explores this little-known reality.

When they return from captivity, girls who were trained to kill and often forced to “marry” their captors must struggle to be accepted back into their communities and make their voices heard.

Interspersing personal accounts with scenes from daily life, this documentary dares to believe in a better future for these women who are united in a common battle.

RECOMMENDED AGE LEVEL

This film is suitable for learners aged 15 and up. This film contains mature content including descriptions of violence and sexual violence. It is recommended that educators’ preview this film before presenting it to their students.

RECOMMENDED SUBJECT AREAS

This film can be integrated into curriculum in the following subject areas at the secondary and post-secondary level:

- Social Studies
- World Issues
- Geography
- History
- African Studies
- Human Rights
- International Law
- International Relations & International Development
- Women’s Studies
- Anthropology
- Psychology
- Political Science

ABOUT THE GUIDE

This guide is designed to accompany the film, *Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers* and to promote discussion surrounding the issues raised in the film including: child soldiers, war crimes, human rights, civil war in Uganda, rehabilitation and reintegration, empathy and understanding, gender equality, empowerment of women, and peace and reconciliation. By using this guide as a starting point, educators will feel more at ease with the subject matter addressed in the film. The various sections of the guide are intended to provide contextual information that will add to the viewing experience. The sections entitled “Discussion Questions” and “Suggested Activities” are designed to spark discussion and aid in the development of customized lesson plans for individual educators. The “Resources” section at the end of this document encourages educators to learn more about the issues associated with the civil war in Uganda and the enlistment of child soldiers. Additional films, books and resources (NFB and non-NFB) are also listed to assist with further study for both educators and students.

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ABOUT UGANDA AND THE CIVIL WAR



Northern Uganda is emerging from a long and bitter civil war, one that had a destabilising effect on the whole country. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), led by Joseph Kony, was the chief instigator of this conflict, though it was also fuelled by long-standing tensions between the country's north and southern regions. The LRA was notorious for random attacks, the looting and destruction of villages, bizarre atrocities and most of all, the abduction of children.

As in many of today's armed conflicts, this one also included high levels of sexual violence against female youth. This involved the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war by military groups and many violations inside families and communities. For example, Northern Uganda's rate of single mothers is very high (31 percent) and the rate of HIV infection among the youth population (11.9 percent) is above the national average.

The recovery process has been slow. Despite the transition to peace and the re-establishment of villages, sexual violence has not decreased. Instead, many community leaders fear that these rates are increasing.^[1] This includes rape, assaults, defilement, violence inside families and marriages, sexual coercion and forms of sexual exploitation. Perpetrators include family members, friends, and community members and authority figures. Extremely high levels of domestic violence (50–70 percent) have also been reported, with the rate being close to twice that of the national average.^[2]

A central problem is the poor functioning of protection mechanisms. Parents are reluctant to report violations or have perpetrators punished for their actions. Instead they seek informal agreements, ones that often include bribes or payments. This may be a legacy of the war when people felt that state-run mechanisms did not protect them. Girls continue to fear attacks from the police and there are many rumours of high levels of corruption. It has been hard to re-establish trust in these institutions.

Part of Northern Uganda's peace process is the reuniting of the country. Old divisions between the North and South need to be addressed, including the provision of national standards of service and protection. Despite long-standing suspicions, there is a growing recognition that this is a basic requirement for lasting peace. Special attention must be given to the needs of the youth population.

According to a report from the International Social Security Association, Uganda, with a median age of 15 years, has the youngest population in the world.^[3]

The peace processes must also address the many violations that occurred to children, particularly female youth, during the war and in its immediate aftermath. In October 2008, the UN's Committee on the Rights of the Child emphasized the need for improved psychological and physical recovery assistance to child victims of armed conflict, as "[t]he Committee is

^[1] According to data received through the GBV Information Management System (GBV IMS) between January 2009 and March 2010, an average of 227 cases was reported per month to five NGO partners. Rape constituted nearly 40% of these cases. A rise in the incidence of sexual violence and domestic violence is recognized as a major problem in many post-conflict situations.

^[2] <http://www.who.int/bulletin/Koenig0103.pdf>. The Ugandan Parliament passed a bill against domestic violence over a year ago. President Yoweri Museveni has been criticized by women's groups because he has not given this law his assent.

^[3] <http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/-/2558/504754/-/rm3wwdz/-/index.html>

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concerned that customary reconciliation practices may re-victimize children who have been recruited or used in hostilities, especially girls who have suffered sexual violence.”^[4] Since the signing of the Action Plan to Halt Child Rights Violations in 2009 with the Government of Uganda, the UN Task Force on Children and Armed Conflict has raised awareness within Uganda’s armed forces of Security Council Resolution 1612 and child rights violations, “especially highlighting acts of sexual violence that had mainly been perpetrated against children by [the Uganda People’s Defense Force] and its auxiliary forces.”^[5]

ABOUT GRACE, MILLY, LUCY AND THEIR EXPERIENCE

Grace, Milly, Lucy and other young women like them have experienced captivity and long journeys on foot to training camps near the Sudanese border. In addition to being trained to participate as cooks, porters, spies and other roles during combat, many young women have also received military training, learning how to fight and kill. Forced to serve as soldiers, they’ve had to comply with the demands of their captors and become their wives. Children have been born of these forced unions. In life-or-death situations such as these, killing sometimes becomes a game and power relations develop. Breaking away from any feeling of solidarity, the victims themselves become the aggressors. (Source: en.grace-milly-lucy.tv/theFilm)

GRACE AKALLO



Grace Akallo grew up in the quiet village of Kaberikale in Northern Uganda. She attended high school at St-Mary’s, the girls-only Catholic boarding school in Aboke, in the district of Lira.

Forces of the Lord’s Resistance Army attacked the college during the night of October 9, 1996, abducting 139 resident girls. Grace Akallo was one of them. She was 15 years old.

During the six months she spent in captivity, Grace was tortured and raped. One day she managed to escape during an ambush. She went back to St-Mary’s, determined to put the trauma of her captivity behind her and to finish high school.

In 2002, she was admitted to Ugandan Christian University and two years later, thanks to an international exchange program, entered Gordon College near Boston, Massachusetts. She has lived in the US ever since and is currently finishing her master’s degree in International Development and Social Change at Clark University.

Grace Akallo has become a spokesperson for the children of Northern Uganda. She is also setting up a foundation, called Gift of Grace, which will facilitate other war-affected girls’ return to school.

^[4] Committee on the Rights of the Child, “Concluding Observations: Uganda,” CRC/C/OPAC/UGA/CO/1, October 2008, pg. 7.

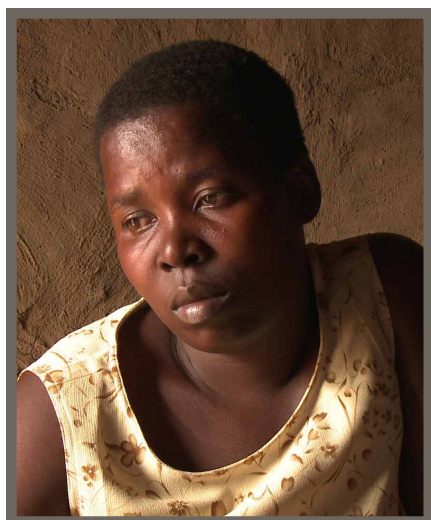
^[5] Security Council “Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Uganda,” S/2009/462, 15 September 2009, pg. 2.

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In November 2008, Grace teamed up with four other ex-child soldiers as well as the United Nations in launching an organization supporting young victims of conflict ([Network of Young People Affected by War – NYPAW](#)). Meant to provide a forum for discussion, NYPAW also strives to spare others the tragedy their founders went through.

Grace Akallo now speaks for the many voiceless girl soldiers of Uganda. Through her advocacy, she hopes to bring lasting peace to a region the world seems to have already forgotten about.

MILLY AUMA



Milly Auma was nine years old when the Lord's Resistance Army raided her village of Patiko in Northern Uganda during the night. For the next year, Milly marched through the bush alongside the rebels operating in the border area of South Sudan. She survived by plundering and stealing food en route. Since she already knew how to read and write, the rebel commanders singled her out for special training as a first-aid nurse, tasked with looking after rebel casualties and extracting bullets. Later she became an LRA commander herself and was much respected by other female combatants and their children.

When the Sudanese army was given permission to attack LRA bases on South Sudanese soil, Milly used the ensuing chaos to flee with her two daughters.

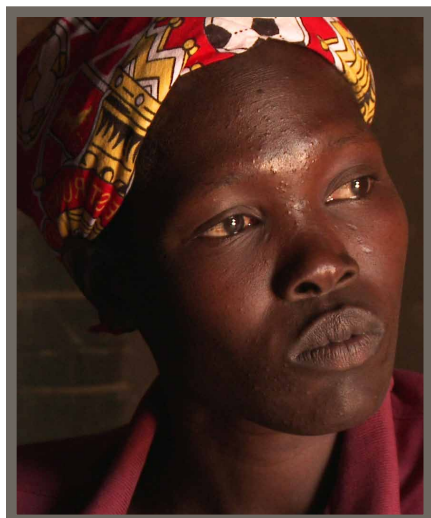
Back in civilian life, Milly co-founded (with three other women) Empowering Hands, the world's first organization run by former girl soldiers to help other victims of armed conflict. Empowering Hands offers powerful therapy to girls who have been left to fend for themselves after their return from the bush.

Things haven't been easy, but the girls are determined not to give up: they lend a helping hand, they listen, network, offer advice and share the horrors of their lost youth.

Empowering Hands has offered Milly a fresh start; it has given her a new lease on life and a sense of redemption, helping her to regain the strength to go on with her life...

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LUCY ACHERO



Lucy Achero was a real soldier. Diligent in everything she did, she moved up the ranks and became an officer close to the LRA leadership. She was nine years old when she was abducted. Today she's 27.

At first, Lucy received standard military training in the camps and fought when she was told to. At the age of 12, she was "given" to a commander called Oguam. Her training intensified and she was recognized as a fully fledged soldier. When Oguam died, she was given to another commander after a three day "purification" period. Her new husband, Okello Canodonga, already had 28 other "wives," including Milly.

Lucy grew up in the LRA. As her training progressed, she was promoted and put in charge of camp security, a policing job whose purpose was to control the camp's inhabitants and make sure no one escaped. Finally she was made an officer, which gave her command authority during attacks and raids, mostly against the Dinka population in South Sudan, looking for food, chickens or grain. She was also involved in direct combat with the Ugandan army.

After spending ten years in the bush, Lucy's demobilization did not go smoothly. Although she and her two children were welcomed back by her family, the wider community did not react as well. The children suffered abuse and were accused of being rebel offspring. Initially, Lucy herself benefited from some support by social services, but she quickly found herself isolated and abandoned.

During the many years spent with the LRA, she went from being a victim at the hands of much older men to being the commanding officer of children who were abducted and abused, just as she had been. Conflicting feelings have haunted her ever since, feelings of guilt for what she did, even though she may not bear the ultimate responsibility for her actions.

Today Lucy lives with her doubts behind a wall of silence. Reintegration has turned out to be an uphill and ongoing struggle.

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ABOUT EMPOWERING HANDS (EH)

Empowering Hands was founded in 2004 by a group of young women affected by the war in Northern Uganda. Members of the group work together to facilitate dialogue within communities with the goal of peaceful re-integration of young people who have been abducted and subjected to the atrocities of civil war. Many of the people EH works with have escaped or been released from armed conflict and are trying to re-integrate into their home communities. EH facilitators, many of whom who have been involved in armed conflict themselves, conduct workshop sessions wherein returnees and community members can share a dialogue to understand and change their situation and to promote greater understanding and ease the return to the community. EH facilitators use drama, music and dance to help returnees to cope with their situation and to help community members develop empathy towards the returnees. Earnings from their performances go to a revolving fund that enables group members to start income-generating projects.

For more information about Empowering Hands, please visit <empowering-hands.org>.

PREVIEWING THE FILM

It is always important to preview a film before watching it with your students. While previewing *Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers*, make a list of reflective discussion questions that may be pertinent for your students, keep track of words/terms and concepts that may need demystifying and write a short film summary that will help your students to understand what the film is about before screening it. This film also contains some mature and sensitive subject matter. It is up to you to determine how you would like to address this content with your students, although we recommend informing your students that this content is part of the film before you screen it with them.

LEARNING APPROACHES

Your students may not know much about child soldiers or they may be well-informed. Encourage them to explore what they know and what they want to know BEFORE watching the film *Grace, Milly, Lucy* using the KWL tool.

The KWL is an excellent inquiry-based tool that is very useful for exploring media works in the classroom. This tool challenges students to question their own assumptions, to reflect on their ideas and knowledge about the film or media text they are consuming and to share what they learned in the process. The letters in the acronym KWL represent three concepts: What do I already Know about the subject? what do I Want to know? and what have I Learned? You may take this process a step further and add a “C” (How have my opinions and knowledge Changed after watching the film?). A KWL(C) can follow a very simple structure, as in this example. The KWL was developed by Donna Ogle, 1986.

What I know	What I want to know	What I learned	How my opinion has changed

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

There are several ways that you can discuss the film, both before and after you screen it. The following are suggestions for questions to be discussed with your students, as well as ways that you can encourage your students to reflect on the issues presented in the film.

Brainstorm Method: Prepare four or five reflective discussion questions in advance, and create copies so that you have at least four or five copies of each question. Distribute discussion questions to the class before watching the film. Ask students to try to answer their question while watching the film. Provide them with time after viewing the film to write down their responses. Then, ask students to form groups based on their questions. In groups, encourage students to discuss their responses and record them on large sheets of paper. Once each group member has had a chance to share their response with their group, invite each group to share their responses with the larger group. Sample questions include:

- a. What did you learn about Northern Uganda by watching this film? Do you feel that you have a strong understanding of what is happening there? If so, explain. If not, explain what is confusing to you.
- b. Why do you think armed groups such as the LRA (Lord's Resistance Army) enlist child soldiers?
- c. Describe the work of Empowering Hands. What do they do and why is this work important? In your opinion, what other work is needed to assist former child soldiers in reintegrating into their families and communities.
- d. Describe what you knew about the enlistment of child soldiers before watching this film. In your opinion, why don't we know very much about this issue? Alternatively, why do we know so much?
- e. How did this film make you feel? Why do you think the film elicited these feelings?
- f. Who do you think should be responsible for ending the worldwide practice of enlisting child soldiers? Who is responsible?

MEDIA LITERACY QUESTIONS

While watching a film with your students, it is important to not only examine the content of the film but also its construction. The following provides a bit of background about media literacy.

Media literacy is concerned with the process of understanding and using the mass media. It is also concerned with helping students develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the mass media, the techniques used by them, and the impact of these techniques. More specifically, it is education that aims to increase students' understanding and enjoyment of how the media work, how they produce meaning, how they are organized and how they construct reality. Ultimately, media literacy education must aim to produce students who have an understanding of the media that includes a knowledge of their strengths and weaknesses, biases and priorities, role and impact, and artistry and artifice. Media literacy is a life skill. (Ontario Association for Media Literacy, *Ontario Media Literacy Resource Guide*)

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The following questions will assist students in understanding how the film *Grace, Milly, Lucy . . . Child Soldiers* is constructed. These questions can be addressed in several ways using various teaching methods—the brainstorming approach described above is a suitable method for media literacy questions.

1. From whose point of view is this story told? Why do you think the filmmaker, Raymonde Provencher, chose to tell the story in this way?
2. What techniques are used to engage viewers?
3. How did the filmmaker choose to represent violent scenes in the film? In your opinion, were these choices effective?
4. How did the filmmaker choose to tell parts of the story that had happened in the past? Do you think these choices were effective?
5. Describe the music used in the film. What impact did the music have on the story?
6. How do you think someone who has lived through armed conflict would interpret or respond to this film?
7. In your opinion, did this film reinforce or dispel any stereotypes you had previously held?
8. How well do you think this film represents reality?
9. How would you describe the style of this film? Is it similar to or different from other documentaries you have seen?
10. Does this film promote a specific ideology or way of thinking? Why do you think it does or does not?
11. Do you think that it is important that films like this are created? Why or why not? Reflect on how this film is different from a story you may have seen on the news about child soldiers.
12. How does the documentary film format differ from other media texts you may have encountered including Twitter, books, newspapers, magazines, websites, television news, fiction films, television, Facebook, etc.? How effective do you think these other media are in relaying information about important social issues? If you were responsible for raising awareness about child soldiers, which media would you use and why?

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SUGGESTED CLASSROOM, SCHOOL-WIDE AND COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Now that you have watched and discussed the film with your students, reflect on how this learning can be extended to the classroom and your whole school. Here are some suggestions:

1. HOST A SCREENING IN YOUR SCHOOL

Students should now know more about the situation in Northern Uganda, armed conflict and the enlistment of child soldiers. One way to spread the word about these important issues is to host a screening for other students to watch the film. Encourage your students to plan a screening for the whole school. They will need to work with school administration to secure a date and location, secure equipment, create promotional materials and invitations, invite a guest speaker and host a discussion. It is important for students to determine their audience, ensure the film is appropriate and inform the audience of the sensitivities surrounding the subject matter presented in the film. Leave it up to your students to organize this activity: in addition to learning how to host and promote a large-scale event (a useful set of skills), they will also be raising awareness about an important issue.

2. INVITE A SPEAKER

Just as Grace Akallo is working to raise awareness about the plight of child soldiers, organizations are striving for the same goal. Encourage your students to research these organizations, find one that interests them, connect with it and see if a representative can come and speak to the class or the whole school about the issues raised in the film. Many organizations will be pleased to send a speaker—all you need to do is ask! If a speaker cannot come to you, suggest an online appearance via Skype or another online videoconferencing technology. The idea is to connect, share information and ask questions in a supportive and open-minded setting.

3. START A CLUB

With staff supervision, encourage your students to start a club dedicated to social issues that are of interest and concern to them, including the role of children in armed conflict. The club can meet regularly to discuss books, watch films and conduct research on these topics, as well as conduct fundraisers and events such as those listed above to raise awareness in the school and in their community. There are plenty of NGOs and activist groups who work with schools by providing tools and resources to guide students; encourage your students to do their research and find a group that aligns with their own mission and vision.

4. HOST A COMMUNITY SCREENING

Host a screening in your community to raise awareness about the plight of child soldiers and the situation in Northern Uganda? You can build partnerships in your community with local organizations, use your skills to promote the event and bring this issue out into the open. Contact local special interest groups (including libraries, churches, community centres, cultural community groups) and ask if they would be interested in hosting a screening to build awareness. Work with the group to develop a grass-roots marketing campaign that includes social media and traditional media—encourage others (including your parents) to get involved by opening their minds and learning about the impacts of armed conflict. Invite local organizations to participate by having a table at the event to raise awareness on specific issues and to guide your audience as to what they can do to help.

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RESOURCES, SUGGESTED READING AND HOW TO HELP

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE FILM, INCLUDING REHABILITATION AND THE ENLISTMENT OF CHILD SOLDIERS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD, PLEASE VISIT ITS OFFICIAL WEBSITE:
<EN.GRACE-MILLY-LUCY.TV/THEFILM>.

KEY ACTORS

INTERNATIONAL BUREAU FOR CHILDREN'S RIGHTS
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Fax: 1 514 932 9453
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Website: ibcr.org/eng

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Fax: +1 212 963 0807
Website: un.org/children/conflict/english/index.html

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF)
UNICEF House
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Tel.: +1 212 326 7000
Website: unicef.org/protection/index.html

WATCHLIST ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT
c/o Women's Refugee Commission
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Email: watchlist@watchlist.org
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CHILD RIGHTS INFORMATION NETWORK (CRIN)

East Studio
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Website: crin.org

Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers

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CHILD SOLDIERS INITIATIVE

Search for Common Ground
1601 Connecticut Ave., NW, Suite 200
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Website: childsoldiersinitiative.org

EDUCATION

INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN PEACE KEEPING AND PEACE BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMME, STADTSCHLAINING, AUSTRIA

Specialization course on “Child Protection, Monitoring and Rehabilitation” to prepare experts who would like to become involved in monitoring, advisory, and executive functions related to children in crisis areas.

aspr.ac.at/aspr

INTERNATIONAL CIVILIAN PEACE KEEPING AND PEACE BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMME, STADTSCHLAINING, AUSTRIA

Specialization course on “Child Protection, Monitoring and Rehabilitation” for experts who are already involved or would like to become specifically engaged in child protection, monitoring and rehabilitation in the framework of UN field missions.

aspr.ac.at/aspr

UNIVERSITY FOR PEACE, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA

Academic program that offers master’s degrees, as well as training and specialization courses that focus on the fundamental causes of conflict through a multidisciplinary, multicultural-oriented approach.

upeace.org

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THE CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT UNIT, THE CHILDREN'S LEGAL CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF ESSEX,
COLCHESTER, UNITED KINGDOM

It offers the first postgraduate degree in international human rights law in the United Kingdom, as well as a suite of undergraduate human rights degrees.

essex.ac.uk/armedcon and essex.ac.uk/human_rights_centre

GRACE AKALLO'S FULL SPEECH TO THE UN (TEXT AND VIDEO)

un.org/children/conflict/english/29-apr-2009-statement-by-grace-akallo-to-the-security.html

RESEARCH

GUIDE TO INTERNATIONAL HUMANITARIAN AND HUMAN RIGHTS LAW: CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT

Comprehensive reference tool to translate international laws and norms related to general use in relation to children and armed conflict.

ibcr.org/editor/assets/thematic_report/5/Conflict_Eng.pdf

COALITION TO STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Bibliography on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of child soldiers.

child-soldiers.org/childsoldiers/Final_June_2009_DDR_Bibliography.pdf

COALITION TO STOP THE USE OF CHILD SOLDIERS

Global report on legislation and practice related to the recruitment and use of child soldiers in over 190 countries worldwide.

childsoldiersglobalreport.org

2009 MACHEL STUDY 10-YEAR STRATEGIC REVIEW – CHILDREN AND CONFLICT IN A CHANGING WORLD

Review of the 1996 Graça Machel report.

unicef.org/publications/files/Machel_Study_10_Year_Strategic_Review_EN_030909.pdf

NGO GROUP FOR THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Network of 80 international and national non-governmental organizations which work together to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

childrightsnet.org

REPORTS BY THE OFFICE OF THE SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UN, THE SECURITY COUNCIL, THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL AND THE UN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC)

un.org/children/conflict/english/reports.html

SECURITY COUNCIL WORKING GROUP ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICTS

Working group that reviews the reports of the monitoring and reporting mechanism and reviews progress in the development and implementation of action plans.

un.org/children/conflict/english/securitycouncilwgroupdoc.html

UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Country reports and the Committee's recommendations.

ohchr.org/english/bodies/crc/sessions.html

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UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES (UNHCR)
Lesson plan for ages 12 to 14 in Civic Education: Child Soldiers.
unhcr.org/469dc0e82.html

UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND SECURITY COUNCIL ON CHILDREN AND ARMED CONFLICT
un.org/children/conflict/english/resolutions.html

RELATED FILMS FROM THE NFB

EVERYBODY'S CHILDREN | Dir. Monika Delmos | 2008 | 51 min 27 s
A DREAM FOR KABUL | Dir. Philippe Baylaucq | 2008 | 81 min 35 s
FROM FAR AWAY | Dir. Shira Avni, Serene El-haj Daoud | 2003 | 6 min 39 s
EX-CHILD/EX-ENFANT | Dir. Jacques Drouin | 1994 | 4 min 57 s
OF LIVES UPROOTED | Pierre Marier | 1988 | 9 min 38 s
THE STREETS OF SAIGON | Michael Rubbo | 1973 | 28 min 19 s
PROSECUTOR | Dir. Barry Stevens | 2010 | 94 min 36 s

SUGGESTED READING

Girl Soldier: A Story of Hope for Northern Uganda's Children, Grace Akallo and Faith J.H. McDonnell, Chosen Books, 2007.
A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, Ishmael Beah, Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2007.
Child, Victim, Soldier: The Loss of Innocence in Uganda, Donald H. Dunson, Orbis Books, 2008.
They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest to Eradicate the Use of Child Soldiers, Roméo Dallaire, Random House 2010.

CREDITS

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