

## Protecting Children in Emergencies

### *Escalating Threats to Children Must Be Addressed*

#### WARS, CONFLICTS AND NATURAL DISASTERS WORLDWIDE ARE PUTTING MILLIONS OF CHILDREN AT RISK.

Since 1990, over 2 million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict. At least 6 million children have been permanently disabled or seriously injured, and more than 1 million have been orphaned or separated from their families.<sup>1</sup>

In contrast to a century ago, when only 5 percent of war casualties were civilians, today more than 90 percent of those killed and wounded as a result of hostilities are civilians, about half of them children.<sup>2</sup>

Natural disasters, such as the Asian tsunami of December 26, 2004, can affect even more children, causing them to lose their homes, their families, their

schools, their access to adequate food, water and sanitation and even their lives in a matter of minutes.

Despite these statistics, however, the protection of children remains a secondary concern for the international community in all phases of emergency response. The failure to protect children from these escalating threats not only results in personal tragedy but carries a long-term social cost as well, including the spread of HIV/AIDS, an elevated maternal and infant mortality rate, a loss of education and a generation of marginalized youth.

**THE BOTTOM LINE:** Protecting children in crises must be a top priority in every stage of every emergency response.

#### TYPES OF PROTECTION CHILDREN NEED MOST IN EMERGENCIES

SAVE THE CHILDREN HAS IDENTIFIED SEVEN CRITICAL TYPES OF PROTECTION THAT CHILDREN REQUIRE IN DISASTER AREAS AND WAR ZONES:

1. Protection from physical harm.
2. Protection from exploitation and gender-based violence.
3. Protection from psychosocial distress.
4. Protection from recruitment into armed groups.
5. Protection from family separation.
6. Protection from abuses related to forced displacement.
7. Protection from denial of children's access to quality education.

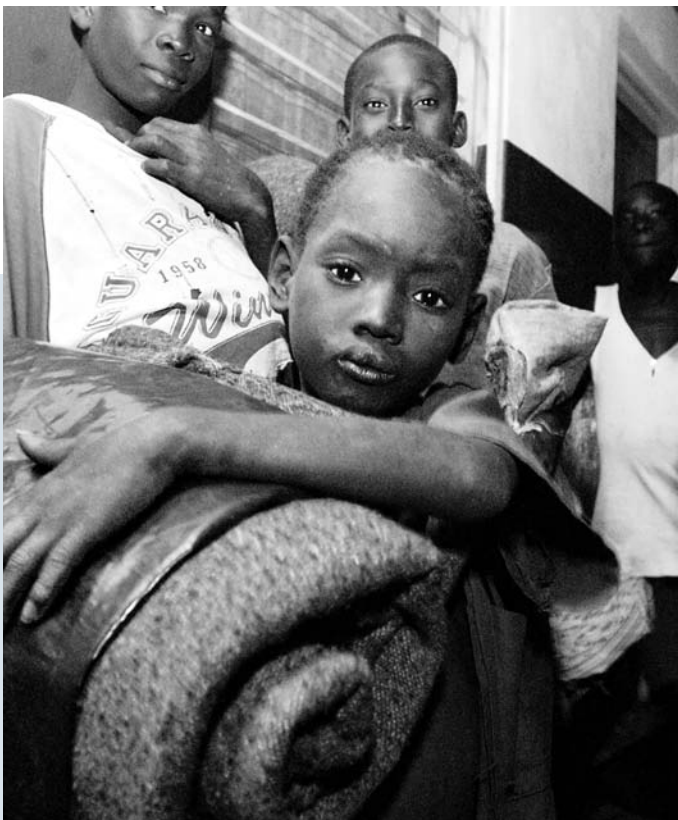


## IMPROVING AND EXPANDING PROTECTIONS FOR CHILDREN

### DURING EMERGENCIES, CHILDREN FACE UNIQUE DANGERS.

Both boys and girls face an increased risk of disease, malnutrition, gender-based violence, exploitation and a wide range of other violations including death and injury. They often become separated from their families and caregivers and have difficulty obtaining food and humanitarian assistance. The emotional impact on children affected by emergencies can be profound, but those who remain in the care of their families and communities are likely to recover more quickly. Schools are often closed or inaccessible during emergencies, leaving children without structure in their daily lives. Under these circumstances, children—some as young as seven years of age—have been abducted or coerced into joining armed forces or groups, where they are used as porters, spies, fighters and for sexual purposes.<sup>3</sup> Child traffickers take advantage of social and community disruptions when governments and aid agencies are focused on other aspects of the emergency response.

**EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES ALREADY EXIST TO PROTECT CHILDREN.** Save the Children seeks to integrate child protection into all its emergency response programs, at every stage of the crisis. As part of this integration, Save the Children has developed strategies and programs to identify and prevent abuse; restore dignified living conditions for children; and promote children's rights. Principal strategies include family tracing and reunification; education for displaced and refugee children; improved monitoring and accountability systems; land mine awareness; and activities to support children's emotional and developmental needs.



### TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES AND REDUCE THEIR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL RISKS, SAVE THE CHILDREN IS CALLING ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO TAKE THE FOLLOWS STEPS:

- Make child protection an integral part of every humanitarian response. Incorporate child protection programming into the delivery of all services including food, shelter, health and water and sanitation. Recognize education as an important means of protection.
- Ratify, enforce, monitor and report on international treaties created to protect children, including the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, The International Criminal Court Rome Statute, Genocide Convention, International Labor Organization Convention 182, and the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.
- Provide adequate resources for child protection activities, not only as an immediate response to current crises but also as part of a long-term effort to prevent conflict, promote sustainable development and mitigate the effects of natural disasters.
- Urge states to support a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism designed to provide timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on violations against children.
- Ensure that all nation states recognize that children are central to the peace and security agenda. Peacekeeping mandates should include specific provisions to protect and assist children and improve and expand child protection training for all those involved in an emergency response, including members of the armed forces. Child Protection Advisors should be part of every UN mission.

### NIGHT COMMUTERS

*In northern Uganda, where the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has forced more than 20,000 children into service as soldiers, porters and sexual slaves, children live in constant fear. In an attempt to remain safe, each night tens of thousands of children leave their remote villages and walk for miles to reach the relative safety of towns where they sleep in empty churches, bus stations and doorways. In the mornings they return home to quickly see their families, try to find their day's meal, and walk to school.*

## WHAT IS CHILD PROTECTION?

While assuring the physical safety of children is crucial, child protection encompasses more than stopping attacks or moving children out of harm's way. It includes measures that promote children's physical and emotional well-being, provide them equal access to basic services, and safeguard their legal and human rights. After a conflict, protection programs provide long-term support to those who have suffered.

The best protection measures *prevent* violence and abuse from happening in the first place. They strengthen the ability of individuals and communities to protect themselves and their children from future threats, laying the groundwork for lasting security and stability.

Even at the earliest stages of an emergency a community-based approach, which mobilizes resources among the affected population and creates a sense of community, is critical in helping children and their families recover from an emergency and begin to rebuild their lives.

**EFFECTIVE CHILD PROTECTION PROGRAMS EXIST BUT FUNDING IS INADEQUATE.** As outlined in a recent report by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, donors did not fund children's programming at the same level as other projects in the United Nations Consolidated Appeals (CAP).<sup>4</sup> On average, donors provided 73 percent of funding requested for all projects in the CAP, but only 60 percent of funding requested for children's projects over the same period of time.

The report also noted that 60 percent of the UN and NGO staff surveyed in 28 countries indicated that funding levels were insufficient to meet even the most basic protection needs of children in these situations. Furthermore, projects focused on providing child protection activities received less funding than traditional child survival projects during this period.<sup>5</sup>

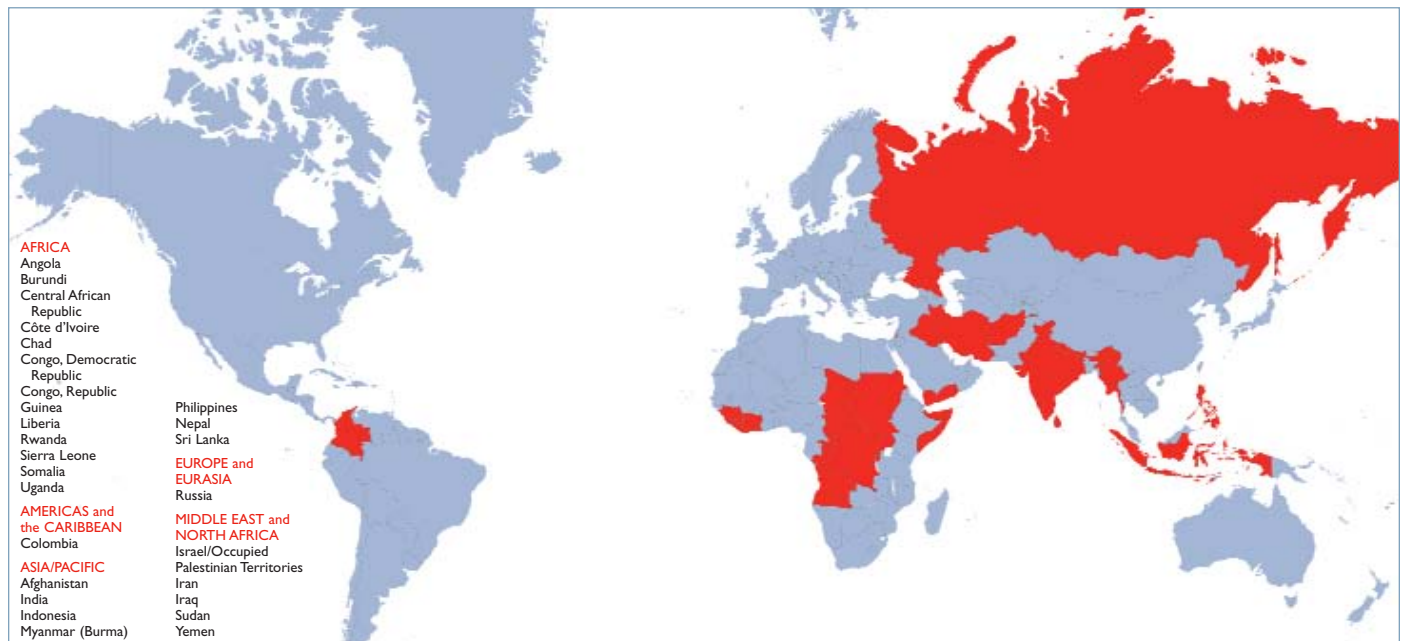
**CHILD PROTECTION IN EMERGENCIES IS BASED ON AN EXTENSIVE INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK.** The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) provides a comprehensive framework of children's rights, as well mechanisms of accountability. The Convention recognizes children's right to be free from abuse and neglect, sexual exploitation, trafficking, abduction, torture, deprivation of liberty, and other forms of maltreatment at all times and provides for special protections during times of conflict.

The Rome Statute defines the "most serious crimes of international concern" to come under the International Criminal Court and classifies rape and other forms of sexual violence, recruitment or use of children under the age of 15 into armed groups as well as attacks against schools as war crimes.

In addition, the International Labour Organization's Convention 182 declares child soldiering to be one of the worst forms of child labor and prohibits forced or compulsory recruitment of children under the age of 18 in armed conflict. The Optional Protocol to the CRC on the involvement of children in armed conflict sets 18 as the age limit for compulsory recruitment and participation in hostilities and a minimum age of 16 for voluntary recruitment.

These instruments, together with the relevant provisions of the Geneva Conventions, the Genocide Convention, the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty, the 1951 Refugee Convention, the 1967 Protocol protecting refugee children and several Security Council Resolutions (1261, 1314, 1379, 1460, 1539), constitute a strong and comprehensive body of legal instruments which provide standards on the protection of children affected by armed conflict and emergencies.

## COUNTRIES / TERRITORIES WHERE CHILD SOLDIERS ARE INVOLVED IN ACTIVE CONFLICT (2001-04)\*



\*The Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, *Child soldiers Global Report 2004*, (London: Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers, 2004) p. 2.



## PROTECTION FROM PHYSICAL HARM

The targeting of civilians during conflict, particularly children, has increased significantly over the last few decades. In Sierra Leone close to 10,000 children were deliberately maimed by militant groups.<sup>6</sup>

Land mines left over from past conflicts have claimed more than one million victims since 1975.<sup>7</sup> Children are especially vulnerable to injury from land mines. By nature curious and adventurous, they can easily mistake a land mine for a toy. Many children are at risk for land mine injury just by performing everyday chores such as gathering wood, tending livestock and collecting water for their families. In Afghanistan and Angola, there is approximately one mine for every person.<sup>8</sup> Angola has more than 70,000 land mine amputees, many of them children.<sup>9</sup>

In addition to those who suffer physical violence, millions of children die due to a lack of access to life-saving care. In 2003, 95,000 children in southern Sudan died from preventable diseases, a situation that is exacerbated by civil war.<sup>10</sup> In every emergency, access to clean water is of paramount importance. Without access to clean water, children can contract diarrhea and other infectious diseases such as cholera and malaria from contaminated water. A recent mortality survey of displaced persons in West Darfur, Sudan, found that fever and diarrhea accounted for 69 percent of deaths among 5 to 15-year olds, and 88 percent of deaths among 0 to 4-year olds.<sup>11</sup> Recent outbreaks of cholera, malaria, measles and diarrhea have also threatened the lives of nearly 200,000 displaced Liberian children.<sup>12</sup>



### MAKING A DIFFERENCE

In Iraq, Save the Children has helped reduce child deaths and injuries through education about the dangers of land mines and unexploded ordinances. Save the Children developed four story books, designed several posters, sponsored 14 summer camps for more than 8,500 children, and trained teachers from over 85 schools.

## PROTECTION FROM EXPLOITATION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Certain dangers of war are well known, but there are other, lesser known forms of violence in wartime. Soldiers use rape and forced pregnancy to degrade and humiliate, destroying the social fabric of a community. Women and children have little choice but to engage in exploitative activities to obtain desperately needed food and assistance. The resulting increased rates of HIV/AIDS, elevated maternal and infant mortality rates, and social stigma have long-lasting effects.

Gender-based violence covers a wide range of violations, including rape, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, domestic violence and abduction and trafficking. Although girls and women tend to be the primary victims, boys and men may also be targeted in certain situations. Humanitarian crises and armed conflict in particular can exacerbate the incidence of such violence due to the breakdown of traditional social structures and protective mechanisms. Soldiers use rape and forced pregnancy as an instrument of warfare to degrade and humiliate, damaging the social fabric of a

community. Even within the family, domestic violence frequently increases in situations of intense frustration, fear and stress.

Other contributing factors to gender-based violence include economic desperation, poor camp security and lack of opportunities to earn an income with dignity. The combination of these factors often leads to an increase in exploitation, child trafficking and forced conscription as children are forced to fend for themselves or families face few options for their own survival.

The effects of exploitation and gender-based violence are devastating. Children run the risk of losing all contact with their families and face harsh working conditions that may include physical, psychological and sexual abuse. They also are exposed to increased health risks such as HIV/AIDS. Survivors of sexual violence are sometimes blamed for their own misfortunes or are ostracized from their communities due to the shame of having been raped.

### TERESA'S STORY: A LIBERIAN REFUGEE

*Rebels attacked Teresa's village when she was 14 years old. They killed her parents and took her back to their base where they repeatedly raped her. When they found out she was pregnant they planned to kill her. Teresa escaped to Guinea but in order to support herself and her child she began working as a prostitute in nightclubs. Then Teresa met Hawanatu, a Save the Children refugee staff worker.*

*"Hawanatu took me off the streets, she took me from the night clubs, she took me from the bar and brought me to Save the Children so I could learn a trade and help my children get better tomorrow." Teresa now is learning sewing and embroidery because "if I learn it now, tomorrow I will be able to support my children."*



## PROTECTION FROM PSYCHOSOCIAL DISTRESS

Children exposed to extreme violence manifest a variety of behaviors as normal responses to abnormal events. Some children may withdraw from contact, stop playing and laughing, or become obsessed with violent war games; others may dwell on feelings of guilt or fantasies of revenge or have a continual preoccupation with their role in past events. Aggressiveness, nightmares, eating disturbances, learning problems and physical ailments are also common. If children are not provided with appropriate support and care to begin recovery and healing, short-term problems may lead to longer-term depression or other psychological conditions.

Exposure to physical and sexual violence is often used to turn children into combatants and destroy family loyalties. Abductors may force children to watch—or even commit—atrocities against family and community in order to sever the child's ties to a former life. The social and psychological effects of this kind of abuse may create major obstacles to reintegration when the conflict ends. Similarly, after natural disasters, children may be distressed by what they witnessed and feel powerless to protect themselves and their families.

Programs designed to support the psychosocial needs of children affected by emergencies must foster children's natural resilience and include an understanding of child development as well as knowledge of the culture, traditions and political realities where the program is to take place. Interventions that create a safe place for children to play and express themselves through art, drama, music or sports can help children to cope with their experiences. With the right kind of social support few children will require clinical intervention, such as individualized trauma therapy or residential treatment, and most will be able to rebuild their lives.

Overall, children are more likely to recover from their distressing experiences when they can live with their family and community. Child protection programming should include sensitivity training for caregivers and adults and encourage children to resume a "normal" life as soon as possible by providing opportunities for schooling and recreation.



*Young boys play soccer outside a recreational center in Kass, South Darfur. The center was built by Save the Children to provide internally displaced children with a safe place to play, interact with each other and engage in a variety of activities to learn and express themselves.*

## TSUNAMI'S IMPACT ON CHILD SURVIVORS

Following the tsunami of December 2004, Save the Children asked over 500 parents and caregivers in Aceh Province, Indonesia to describe how their children's attitudes and behaviors changed as a result of the tsunami. The following answers were the most common:

- Children cannot sleep and are afraid to close their eyes at night.
- They don't want to go near the ocean.
- Some are afraid to go back to schools that were damaged.
- Many have lost their self-confidence.
- Some become upset or cry when they hear loud noises.
- Many have bad dreams.

Parents said their children's worst fears were that the tsunami would happen again and that they would be separated from their parents. In order to support recovery, Save the Children has developed education and recreation programs, as well as children's clubs, to help in restoring predictability and normalcy. Structured and supervised activities that give children a chance to express their fears and share their concerns with other children are providing a healing environment as well. Save the Children is also supporting parents to address their own fears and help their children begin recovery.

## PROTECTION FROM RECRUITMENT INTO ARMED GROUPS

At any one time, more than 300,000 children worldwide are fighting as soldiers with government forces or armed opposition groups,<sup>13</sup> accounting for 10 percent of the combatants in ongoing conflicts.<sup>14</sup> Children under the age of 18—some as young as seven—are actively participating in hostilities in 27 countries worldwide.<sup>15</sup>

Forcible or coerced recruitment occurs in many forms. Some children have been abducted at gunpoint and forced to serve, while others enlist as their only means of survival in the face of extreme poverty, abuse or exploitation. Other children join after seeing family members tortured or killed. Roles within armed forces can be fluid, but whether a child is used as a cook, porter, soldier, for sexual purposes or any other purpose, they all face a wide range of dangers.

Although considerable attention has been paid to the development of an international legislative and policy framework for children associated with armed forces in recent years, a wide gap remains between agreed upon standards in international law and the practical reality of children's lives. While thousands of children were demobilized in countries such as Angola and Sierra Leone, up to 30,000 more children were drawn into new conflicts in Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia.<sup>16</sup> In continued conflict areas, such as Sri Lanka and Democratic Republic of Congo, some demobilized child soldiers have been re-recruited by rebels<sup>17</sup>

The first step in protecting children vulnerable to this abuse is to prevent their recruitment. Advocacy to prevent recruitment should take place at the local and international level. All armed groups should be informed of their obligations under international law and urged to release under age participants in conflicts. Programs for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) of armed forces must address the root causes of participation as well as the specific needs of those who were recruited as children. Children should be protected from prosecution for their participation in armed forces, or for acts committed during their participation.

Particular attention must be paid to girls, who are often left out of demobilization programs because they often do not carry weapons. They may also struggle with forced pregnancies and to support children born while they were with the armed groups, leading to stigma. All children formerly associated with armed groups should have access to education and economic opportunity programs so that they will be able to support themselves after they are released. A long-term commitment to children who have been associated with armed groups and forces is critical. A community-based approach to reintegration is most effective, as it will address the needs of all vulnerable children affected by conflict and reduce the hostility generated by targeted assistance to a specific group.



### TOM'S STORY: A REFUGEE FROM SIERRA LEONE

*"In the morning time, my parents sent me to school. I heard the guns sound. I was small. I didn't know where to go. In the night, the rebels came and arrested me. When they caught the prisoners they gave us guns to shoot at them. When we refuse they will shoot us. You see, that's why we do what we did. I did it. I killed somebody. ... At that time, I was eight years old. I can't go home now because the bad acts I did, as soon as I arrive home they will kill me. They never understand that I was a little boy, why I was doing that act."*

### FACTS:

- The use of child soldiers was reported in more than 70 percent of conflict zones studied by Save the Children.<sup>18</sup>
- In Colombia, 1 out of every 4 irregular combatants is a child.<sup>19</sup>
- From 1990-2000, girls under 18 participated in armed conflicts in at least 39 countries.<sup>20</sup>
- In Nepal, Maoist insurgents are using children as young as 10 as porters, spies, informants and bomb planters, while children 13 years and older are recruited as combatants.<sup>21</sup>



## PROTECTION FROM FAMILY SEPARATION

Few things are more frightening for children or more threatening to their safety and well-being than being lost and alone, separated from family and community in the middle of a conflict or natural disaster. Yet, as a result of war or other emergencies, hundreds of thousands of children around the world suffer this terrible experience. Over the last decade, more than 1 million children have been orphaned or separated from their families by armed conflict.<sup>22</sup> Children who become separated from their families are more vulnerable to illness, exploitation, recruitment, and abuse. Without family support and protection, separated children are even more vulnerable to these threats and have fewer resources to help them rebuild their lives. Unless there is early intervention, there is a risk that children will never find their families again, and, for very young children in particular, their survival may be threatened.

Given the risks, it is critical that children who are separated from their families be identified as early as possible to increase their chances for a successful reunification. Most separated children can be reunited

with parents, older siblings or members of their extended families. Through family tracing and reunification programs, Save the Children works to return children to their families and communities; where unification is not possible, alternative arrangements are made. Save the Children has also been a lead agency in developing common guidelines for this important work, *The Inter-agency Guiding Principles for Unaccompanied and Separated Children*.<sup>23</sup>

Adding to the complexity of the family reunification process, is the fact that children often return home to find themselves in new and difficult situations. Parents may have remarried, have more children, or be living in extreme poverty. The child may blame the family or find it difficult to adjust to the changed circumstances. To ensure children's well-being in these circumstances, protection programming should utilize community monitoring and work with government social welfare departments to provide appropriate follow-up services over the long term.



Rina Agustina sits with her father after being reunited. They were separated by the tsunami in Banda Aceh, Indonesia, for nearly one month.



## PROTECTION FROM ABUSES RELATED TO FORCED DISPLACEMENT

In 2003, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated there were over 9.6 million refugees living worldwide.<sup>24</sup> That same year the Global IDP Project estimated that nearly 25 million people were internally displaced in approximately 50 countries.<sup>25</sup> Most of these individuals were children, forced to live for months, sometimes years, in camps. When disaster strikes, families suffer multiple and severe disruptions: not only do they lose their homes and livelihoods, but they often lose their autonomy, livelihoods, and dignity in the camps that are supposed to provide humanitarian relief and protection.

Whether an internally displaced person (IDP) or a refugee, whether as a result of war or natural disaster, a child's vulnerability to abuse in this environment is very high. With an uncertain future, repeated emotional stress and only minimal access to education children are at risk in the short term as well as in the long term. To survive in these situations where their voices are rarely heard, women and children in refugee and IDP camps often have little choice but to barter with their bodies to obtain desperately needed food and assistance. With the arrival of wealth and power that comes with peacekeeping and humanitarian personnel, children, particularly adolescent and young girls, become even more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse, as many are put under increased pressure to supplement the family income and resources when rations and supplies run low.

While the full extent of sexual exploitation and abuse of displaced children in war and conflict is largely unknown, reports of these abuses continue to surface. In 2004, the UN Internal Oversight Services investigated the Department of Peacekeeping Operations in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in Bunia and found that sexual relations between peacekeepers and Congolese women and girls, some as young as 13, occurred regularly, usually in exchange for food or small sums of money.<sup>26</sup> A joint Save the Children/UNHCR assessment mission looking at refugee and IDP communities in West Africa in 2001<sup>27</sup> found that a large number of refugee and displaced children, mainly girls, were victims of sexual violence and many more were forced into exploitative relationships in order to obtain food, shelter, healthcare and education.

Integration of protection into humanitarian action can provide simple solutions, such as consultations with women in developing a camp protection plan that includes proper lighting and locations of latrines, as well as the construction of lockable latrines for girls and women.

Although the international community has established a set of laws and institutions to protect and assist refugees and recognized a mandate for UNCHR, there is no specific legal protection nor a specific agency charged with the protection of internally displaced adults and children.

### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO



After six years of conflict between rebel and government forces and several neighboring armies the UN estimates that over 2.3 million people are displaced.<sup>28</sup> Many of these are children who continue to suffer the most.

- One in five children will die before reaching the age of five.<sup>29</sup>
- Only 50 percent of children aged 6-11 attend school.<sup>30</sup>
- 38 percent of children under five have stunted growth due to hunger and malnutrition.<sup>31</sup>
- In the city of Bunia alone there are 130,000 internally displaced people, of which roughly 70 percent are children.<sup>32</sup>
- In early 2003 Congolese authorities indicated that about 30,000 child soldiers were awaiting demobilization.<sup>33</sup>

## PROTECTION FROM DENIAL OF CHILDREN'S ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION

War and natural disasters deprive millions of children from the protection provided by educational opportunities. Of the 104 million children out of school, half live in the midst of conflict or in areas recovering from its devastation.<sup>34</sup>

Conflicts and natural disasters destabilize infrastructure, leaving gaps in the educational system. Schools are often destroyed or closed because of insecurity. Even if a school is able to operate, many crisis-affected families do not have the resources to buy books or pay school fees. Simply walking to class may endanger a student's life in conflict-prone areas, especially when combatants target schools and educational facilities. Children lose access to the learning opportunities, social relationships and daily structured routines that are vitally important for their development.

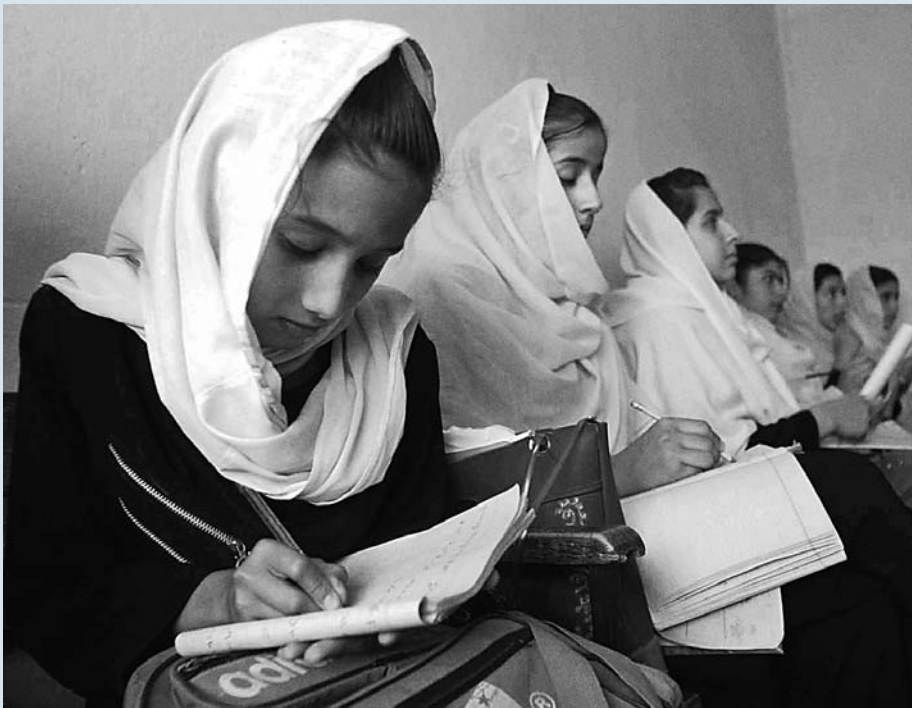
Lack of educational opportunities is a principal concern for refugees and internally displaced persons, with consequences for long-term development. Refugee adolescents are one of the most under-served groups: the Refugee Education Trust estimates that only 3 percent of the 1.5 million refugee children between the ages of 12 and 17 worldwide have access to education, making them increasingly vulnerable to under age recruitment or sexual exploitation.<sup>35</sup>

Without an education, children face a bleak future. In addition to fostering literacy and teaching livelihood skills, schools establish a sense of normalcy and security and protect children against forced labor, military recruitment and sexual exploitation. The school curriculum may also include subjects that assist children in protecting themselves from dangers associated with conflict such as an increased risk of HIV/AIDS or land mines. Classes can also teach children communication skills and teamwork as well as begin a process of peace and reconciliation.

All too often education has been overlooked in emergency settings and has been seen as an area that can only be considered as part of long-term development strategies. Humanitarian donors traditionally do not focus their funding on education, or focus only on school reconstruction and supplies. Appropriate education interventions in emergencies need to focus on quality and content, rather than solely on access and infrastructure, through investments in teacher training, curriculum development, and the development of schools as safe areas.

### FACTS

- In 2002, over 27 million school-age children living in 10 of the world's least stable countries were not enrolled in school.<sup>36</sup>
- The Education Ministry in Sri Lanka reported that at least one-third of its children did not attend school because of armed conflict.<sup>37</sup>
- In West Bank and Gaza, curfews, sieges and violence have led to the closure of 1,300 schools.<sup>38</sup>
- In Nepal, over half of the country's children have no access to primary schooling.<sup>39</sup>
- Since the renewed violence in Côte d'Ivoire, more than 1 million primary school students have experienced interruptions in their schooling.<sup>40</sup>



THE INTER-AGENCY NETWORK FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES RECENTLY RELEASED THEIR MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES. MAJOR DONORS, NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS, AND KEY INTERNATIONAL ACTORS SHOULD IMPLEMENT THESE STANDARDS AS PART OF EVERY HUMANITARIAN INTERVENTION.

## MONITORING AND REPORTING

Despite numerous international initiatives, there is still no systematic global monitoring and reporting system in place to track the number of children affected by conflict, the specific threats they face, and the steps taken to address their needs. Efforts to date remain ad hoc, and information about children and armed conflict is unreliable.

A comprehensive system to ensure the protection of children in emergencies must include timely and reliable monitoring and reporting procedures, accompanied by a mechanism to ensure compliance at the field level.<sup>41</sup> Such a system would establish consistent standards and methodologies for identifying, documenting and verifying child rights violations and using this information to mobilize public opinion, inform policymaking and resource allocation and guide program interventions. The system should also distinctly focus on confidentiality

mechanisms that promote reporting violations as well as prosecuting offenders.

A monitoring and reporting system must be based on three core components: the legal principles of international law; accountability to the people, including children; and transparency. It must contain provisions to identify and detect early warning signals, promote early action, and deny impunity for those who commit crimes against children. States and other parties should be held accountable not only for their actions, but also for their failure to take early action to avert well-identified risks of major violations.

At the same time, security of information must be ensured as well as confidentiality for those who provide it. All necessary steps must be taken to ensure that information is verified, reliable and reported in a timely manner.

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## RECOMMENDATIONS:

TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN IN EMERGENCIES AND REDUCE THEIR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL RISKS, SAVE THE CHILDREN IS CALLING ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1] Make child protection an integral part of every humanitarian response. Incorporate child protection programming in the delivery of all services including the provision of food, shelter, health and water and sanitation. Recognize education as an important means of protection.

2] Ratify, enforce, monitor and report on international treaties created to protect children, including the Geneva Conventions, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and its Optional Protocols, The International Criminal Court Rome Statute, Genocide Convention, International Labor Organization Convention 182, and the 1997 Mine Ban Treaty.

3] Provide adequate resources for child protection activities, not only as immediate responses to current

crises but also as part of a long-term effort to prevent conflict, promote sustainable development and mitigate the effects of natural disasters.

4] Urge states to support a systematic and comprehensive monitoring and reporting mechanism designed to provide timely, objective, accurate and reliable information on violations against children.

5] Ensure that all nation states recognize that children are central to the peace and security agenda. Peacekeeping mandates should include specific provisions to protect and assist children and improve and expand child protection training for all those involved in an emergency response, including members of the armed forces. Child Protection Advisors should be part of every UN mission.

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