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# Targeting Children: Small Arms and Children in Conflict

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On 2 October 2001, the *New York Times* reported provisional commander Fazil Ahmend Azimi saying: “It’s been three decades of our people going backward in terms of education. We have young boys that are more familiar with a gun than with school.” Children in Afghanistan “have been raised in a highly militarized ‘Kalashnikov culture;’ in schools both inside the country and refugee camps, textbooks and teaching methods have used images of tanks, guns and bullets in mathematics and reading classes.”

Small arms and light weapons such as Kalashnikovs have affected children in armed conflict in a variety of ways for years. Only recently, however, has the magnitude of the consequences of armed conflict—as well as the proliferation and misuse of small arms—been realized. This article will examine the ways in which small arms affect children and the nexus between small arms, children, and terrorism.

Small arms proliferation has had devastating consequences not only in contemporary conflicts but also on the lives of children. These lightweight, durable, and easily transferable weapons often exacerbate the effects of war and impede post-conflict resolution. The wide availability of small arms has meant that more individuals become combatants, conflicts last longer, and more people (especially children) suffer.<sup>1</sup> Many small arms remain after a conflict ends, and their resulting availability may allow conflicts to re-ignite. Even when further war is avoided, small arms continue to act as instruments for other forms of

violence such as criminal activities, disruption of development assistance, and interference with efforts to deliver food, medicine, and supplies to children in dire need of relief. Refugees are often afraid to return to their homes because of the large number of weapons still in the hands of former combatants who have not been demobilized, or because secret weapons caches remain. Insecurity from the widespread proliferation of small arms may prevent schools from functioning, flood hospitals with wounded, and overburden legal and judicial institutions. In all these cases, society may inadequately provide for the education and health care of its citizens, and fail in the redevelopment of a civil structure for peaceful dispute resolution. Moreover, small arms proliferation may minimize economic opportunities resulting in increased poverty and hardship for millions of children and their families.

How small arms affect children in particular is often difficult to ascertain. Intuitively, if small arms affect civilians in conflict, their toll on children must be considerable. The challenge is determining how considerable this toll is. The conditions in areas devastated by small arms-fuelled conflict—including poverty, malnutrition, disease and injury, lack of education, and the absence of health care—are all among the risk factors for children in these conflict zones. Such conditions directly affect all civilians, but it is children who feel the long-term effects. In countries where the adult population—responsible for creating an environment to protect and support children—has been diminished and devastated by warfare, children are forced to fill adult roles and undertake adult responsibilities before they have attained adult maturity and capabilities.<sup>2</sup>

The following sections outline the myriad ways in which small arms alter the lives of children. The first section examines how small arms cause direct physical and psychological injuries to children. The second section emphasizes how the uncontrolled flow of small arms and misuse of small arms interferes with the provision of children's basic needs and prevents future opportunities. The third section looks at how the proliferation of small arms creates a sustained culture of violence that inhibits the lives of children. The fourth section describes how small arms proliferation contributes to the use of children as soldiers. The final section highlights how terrorist groups that rely on small arms and light weapons to undertake their efforts use armed children in their ranks.

### **Primary Victims of Conflict**

In the last few decades, conflicts have changed from being primarily interstate to intrastate. While it is almost impossible to separate the effects of conflict on children from the effects of small arms on children, small arms are clearly responsible for death, injury, and livelihood challenges. United Nations Children's

Fund (UNICEF) Executive Director Carol Bellamy has said, “More than tanks, missiles, and mortars, light weapons have terrorized children during wars and after. Small arms have probably extinguished more young lives than they have ever protected. Unless their production, transfer, and use are tightly controlled, small arms will inevitably become pernicious tools of destruction.”<sup>3</sup>

One widely quoted statistic is that 90 percent of the casualties of conflict are civilians,<sup>4</sup> the majority of whom are killed by small arms. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), on the other hand, estimates that civilian deaths are actually between 30 and 65 percent of conflict casualties.<sup>5</sup> Regardless of the exact percentage, it has become overwhelmingly clear that small arms, more than any other class of weapon, kill and injure civilians in significant numbers. In Central Mindanao, for example, an Oxfam study found that of 190 conflict related deaths in 2000, 86 percent were civilian victims of small arms.<sup>6</sup> Experts believe that the majority of the victims of small arms are women and children.<sup>7</sup> The number of children killed by armed conflict during the 1990s is estimated at 2 million,<sup>8</sup> but it is unclear how many of these children were killed directly by small arms; child fatalities caused by small arms are rarely specifically noted.<sup>9</sup> It is also extremely unusual that injuries and deaths from small arms are reported and codified.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to causing tremendous fatalities, small arms proliferation and misuse have also caused untold physical suffering for children. Small arms have become the tools of human rights abusers. They are often used in extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances, and torture.<sup>11</sup> The widespread accessibility of small arms and their ease of use have made children both perpetrators and victims of human rights abuses.<sup>12</sup> Small arms are also used to terrorize civilians and facilitate the ability of armed individuals and groups to commit heinous crimes directed specifically at civilians, such as rape, sexual abuse and violence, abductions, slavery, and forced prostitution. In refugee camps, vulnerable populations are not immune from the threat of small arms. These weapons are used in gang rapes, kidnapping, and forced recruitment of children into armed groups.<sup>13</sup> Beyond painful and debilitating physical injuries, many children suffer from psychosocial traumas due to exposure to and use of small arms. These psychosocial results of small arms and light weapons do not always manifest immediately. It may take years for children to come to grips with the suffering they have witnessed and caused due to small arms use.<sup>14</sup>

### **Limiting Opportunities**

#### *Displacement and effect on families*

Conflict fuelled by small arms often causes massive population displacement, uprooting millions of children and their families from their homes and making

children more susceptible to disease, violence, military recruitment, and sexual assault.<sup>15</sup> Approximately 12.8 million refugees and 23 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)—half of them children—have been forced to flee due in large part to violence and conflict fuelled by small arms.<sup>16</sup> “Refugees and IDPs often share a common characteristic—they are motivated by the fear that people with guns will use them on vulnerable communities.”<sup>17</sup> After a conflict has concluded, small arms continue to affect refugees and IDPs, especially children. Children and their families are often afraid to leave camps and return home because of the substantial amounts of weapons that remain in society at large and in the environment through which they would travel.<sup>18</sup> Staying in the camps, however, is often problematic, as many camps have become militarized.

While displacement is one by-product of small arms proliferation, such proliferation also tends to disrupt a child’s traditional family structure. Small arms can devastate the family by causing death or injury of a parent or forced separation of children. In many cases the break-up of the family unit can undermine a child’s development and well-being and limit their future opportunities. Many children are forced to take over care-giving responsibilities due to the death or physical incapacity of a parent caused by small arms. These children often forgo their education in order to earn money to support the family and to care for the remaining family members.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Hindering health and educational opportunities*

Even if a child is spared physical injury from small arms, small arms proliferation often impedes the provision of even the most basic health services. In many conflict areas, children succumb to preventable and treatable ailments. In many cases, non-fatal medical conditions such as measles have resulted in fatalities.<sup>20</sup> In some regions, “the monitoring of treatable diseases, organization and delivery of health care, and vaccination programs have been episodic due to the presence of small arms.”<sup>21</sup>

The widespread proliferation of small arms in a region frequently inhibits children’s educational opportunities. Schools may not function due to rampant instability<sup>22</sup> or because parents and teachers fear that the children will be abducted for use as part of an armed force.<sup>23</sup> For example, in North Kivu, Congo—an area renowned for its systematic abduction of children by the Congolese Rally for Democracy–Goma (RCD-Goma) and the Rwandan Patriotic Army (RPA) for use against the government of Congo—children are often recruited for armed service directly from the schools, either through kidnappings or coercion.<sup>24</sup> Even after a conflict ends, it is often difficult for schools to reopen, because teachers may have been killed or have found other work and few textbooks and other school equipment exist.<sup>25</sup> The resulting lack of education for a significant number

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of children may lead to a loss of future economic power to the country, ensuring that conflict countries remain in a cycle of poverty and violence.

### *Lack of food and humanitarian assistance*

The dangers created by small arms proliferation can impede children's access to food. In many conflict areas, markets are closed, foodstuffs become scarce as fields lay fallow, and transportation links are cut; children have difficulty obtaining even minimal amounts of food.<sup>26</sup> In addition, "homes, land, livestock are all being demanded from civilians at gunpoint."<sup>27</sup> After a conflict, "the mere threat of arms use affects land-use patterns and harvesting, livestock production and grazing and local investment in commercial activities. The disruption of entitlements has profound implications for the social and economic development of communities."<sup>28</sup>

Humanitarian relief agencies are unable to provide basic food aid to needy children because of rampant insecurity caused by the proliferation of small arms in particular regions. Small arms-fuelled conflict and violence often cause aid operations to be delayed, suspended, or cancelled. In addition, relief supplies are often stolen by armed combatants, either to help finance their efforts or to gain valuable resources. Armed groups and individuals view civilians (including women and children) and aid workers as legitimate targets for extortion, threat, theft, rape, and brutality. The Red Cross, the UN, and other aid agency workers are increasingly threatened and murdered (primarily with guns and grenades) as they attempt to undertake their work<sup>29</sup> and experts estimate "the current 'firearm' homicide rate for UN staff is 17-25 per 100,000—homicide rates that are analogous to those experienced in the top ten most dangerous countries in the world." In many cases, the dangers of small arms to aid workers and the difficulty of providing humanitarian assistance diverts resources away from relief supplies into budgets for security services. In some countries, food relief has become too expensive—both in the cost of human lives and cash—to provide much needed food, and children are forced to go hungry.<sup>30</sup>

### *Inhibiting economic opportunities*

Minimal economic investment makes sustainable development impossible, diminishing present and future opportunities for children. Armed groups often block transit routes, disrupt natural resource exploitation, and attack key national industries. The need to address the conflict situation and the lack of public order causes societies to redirect resources that would otherwise go for the rebuilding of the infrastructure, including political, legal, educational, and health care institutions and systems. Donor supported projects can be halted or cancelled due to security concerns about increased gun violence and crime.<sup>36</sup> The destabilizing presence of small arms discourages foreign investment and

tourism. Lack of foreign investment also limits job creation and sustainability, providing limited options to ex-combatants. In a country with limited resources, the educational, vocational, health care, and food needs of children may be lower on a government's list of priorities.<sup>31</sup> With few options, these youth often become embittered and act in ways counter-productive to attempts to rebuild.<sup>32</sup>

### **Cultures of Violence**

After a conflict, small arms may become instruments for other forms of violence, such as crime and banditry. In some societies, surplus weapons may create a culture of violence that traps the whole society in an endless cycle of war.<sup>33</sup> Small arms are often viewed by children in war-affected societies as symbols of power, dominance, and worth. In situations where violence is the norm, small arms become necessary tools for conflict resolution. Such an attitude often turns non-violent dispute resolution into violent and explosive situations. When this occurs, the moral legitimacy of parents and community leaders is undermined, making it difficult for them to teach children how to seek peaceful opportunities and solutions. In some cases, a cultural framework around weapons possession and use has been developed. This often represents a breakdown in the social code.<sup>34</sup>

Rampant small arms misuse can result “in a culture of impunity, as individuals and groups are not held accountable for their misuse of small arms and other socially disruptive actions.”<sup>35</sup> A culture of violence, spurred by the proliferation of small arms, can interfere with a society's attempt to rebuild after a conflict and can trap societies in an unending system of poverty and economic, political, and social strife. In this manner, small arms “destabilize and impoverish the community at large.”<sup>36</sup>

### **Child Soldiers**

An estimated 300,000 children under the age of 18 are fighting in conflicts around the globe. In conflicts from Sri Lanka to Colombia, children are used as front-line combatants and in all combat support capacities, including as cooks, couriers, porters, and spies. In the majority of all of these roles, the weapon is central to a child's experience.<sup>37</sup> In post-conflict situations, child soldiers may view small arms as tools for survival and be unwilling to turn their weapons in or go through organized demobilization programs.

Researchers are increasingly uncovering and examining the link between small arms and the use of children in conflict and have determined that the “availability of small arms is without question a contributing factor to the use of child soldiers.”<sup>38</sup> Children as young as 7 or 8 are sometimes given a weapon

and if they are strong enough to hold it they are taken for military training.<sup>39</sup> A former Kamajor child soldier in Guinea told United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNICEF staff that if the children were given long weapons, the weapons were cut to fit the child's weight. Only after several months of participating as a cook and wood gatherer were these children given guns to fight.<sup>40</sup> Children are trained to use small arms properly in order to make them effective combatants.<sup>41</sup>

Without small arms, children are generally less useful to armed groups.<sup>42</sup> Children may still be used for domestic chores around a camp, but generally not as combatants if small arms are not readily available.<sup>43</sup>

The presence and proliferation of small arms have made child combatants just as effective as adults, and has to a large extent erased distinctions between child and adult combatants. Indeed, some adult combatants recognize that they can use children's vulnerability and immature understanding of conflict to physically or emotionally coerce children into undertaking dangerous tasks.<sup>44</sup>

When looking at the phenomenon of child soldiers, however, there is an inherent contradiction to the small arms issue. Although small arms are the tools of child soldiers and their widespread proliferation may make the use of children more feasible and attractive, the relationship is not causal, nor does small arms proliferation serve as an indicator for the use of children as soldiers. Experts believe that "there is not necessarily a direct cause and effect relationship between small arms and the use of children as soldiers. Children are used as soldiers in areas where arms are in short supply."<sup>45</sup>

### **Small Arms, Children, and Terrorism**

There are 28 terrorist groups currently operating in 18 countries, according to the State Department's bi-annual list of active Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTO). Sixteen of these terrorist groups in twelve countries are known to use child soldiers in their efforts. In virtually all of the 18 countries, children are used as soldiers, either in the official government armed forces, by non-state groups, or by terrorist cells. These groups all rely on the widespread proliferation of small arms to conduct their activities.

For example, the warring parties in Afghanistan have used children for decades. A report prepared by the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers highlights patterns of child recruitment by the Taliban, United Front (Northern Alliance), and other warring factions in Afghanistan.<sup>46</sup> The Coalition was unable to confirm reports of children under 18 participating in al-Qaeda training exercises and operations, but the first U.S. soldier killed by hostile fire in Afghanistan, Army Sergeant 1<sup>st</sup> Class Nathan Ross Chapman, was reportedly shot by a

fourteen-year old. The Coalition documents the use of children by other groups in Afghanistan as well. While the Taliban outwardly opposed the use of children as soldiers, they were reported to use the *madrassa* school system to obtain new young recruits to fill their ranks.<sup>47</sup> In addition, the report found that the Taliban are alleged to have demanded certain numbers of new recruits from particular villages and forced individuals to buy their exemption.<sup>48</sup> The Northern Alliance also has a record of using children, some as young as 11, in their forces. Although the Northern Alliance says their soldiers must be 18 years old to join, teenagers were known to have fought the Taliban.<sup>49</sup>

The groups in Afghanistan are not unique. Many terrorist groups rely on impoverished, desperate children to fill their ranks. Groups ranging from the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) in Turkey and Iraq; the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC), and the National Liberation Army (ELN) in Colombia; and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka have used children in their forces for years, while relying on previous and current supplies of U.S. small arms in undertaking their efforts.

Also of concern is that member countries of the Western coalition fighting al-Qaeda also use children under 18 in their ranks, including the United States. In fact, thirteen of the nineteen North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member countries allow children under the age of 18 to be recruited for military service. Of the permanent members of the UN Security Council only Russia has domestic legislation prohibiting the use of soldiers under the age of 18.<sup>50</sup>

Although the negative effects of small arms on children are clear, these weapons continue to be exported to countries engaged in or on the brink of armed conflict around the world. While many of the ongoing conflicts mentioned

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above rely on existing stockpiles of weapons (and on weapons traded on the black and gray markets), new shipments of small arms and light weapons are constantly entering the supply chain and end up targeting children—on one side of the barrel or the other. Particularly troubling is the continued arming of countries and groups that use children under 18 in their forces. The United States,

for example, is the world's number one arms exporter and a key supplier of military aid and training to states and groups who use child soldiers. Since 11 September, the United States has used military assistance—sometimes in the

form of small arms and light weapons transfers—as incentives for joining the coalition against terror.

## **Conclusion**

During the recent war in Afghanistan, the international community highlighted the dire situation of civilians in that country, and of children in particular. As experts reported that 25 percent of Afghan children die before the age of 4—most due to treatable disease—the consequences of the misuse and proliferation of small arms was seen first hand in children being denied access to a proper education, receiving little or no food, and facing limited economic opportunities.

The effects of small arms proliferation and misuse on children are diverse. Each requires multi-layered solutions working both independently and in concert. Eliminating or (in the short term) minimizing the negative effects of small arms on children will require co-ordination at the national, regional, and international level and cooperation at all levels with and amongst non-governmental organizations.<sup>51</sup> Independently, a large variety of venues are addressing small arms proliferation and the protection of children, but to date, the linkage between the two issues has been minimal. Therefore, a framework for action is key to implementing policies that cut across the myriad fora involved in such policy development, including the UN system, regional organizations, governments, and NGOs.<sup>52</sup> Implementation of existing policies must occur in conjunction with new policy formulation and program implementation.

In particular, measures that control the small arms trade, address the use of child soldiers, develop specific protections for children and adolescents, and implement demobilization and reintegration are essential to comprehensively address the effects of small arms on children.

In the short term, countries must insist that any government armed forces or armed groups receiving their military cooperation or assistance not use children under the age of 18. Further, at a minimum, countries should ensure that post-conflict rebuilding programs include disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration for not only adult soldiers, but child soldiers and civilians as well. At-risk children must be identified early and given special assistance to help them avoid a life dominated by the gun.

As the global war on terror continues, children will continue to be victims of the proliferation of small arms. Every country must do its part to ensure that society's most vulnerable are spared the continued, harmful consequences of these weapons. ❧

## Notes

This article is based in large part on Stohl, Rachel et al, "Putting Children First – Background Report," *Biting the Bullet Project*, December 2001 available at <http://www.international-alert.org/pdf/pubsec/Child1st.pdf>

1. Estimates place the number of firearm deaths a year at more than 500,000, including 200,000 non-conflict related deaths. (Eric Berman and Robert Muggah, "Humanitarianism Under Threat: The Humanitarian Impacts of Small Arms and Light Weapons," *Small Arms Survey*, March 2001: 3) Experts argue that small arms act as a "multiplier of violence," (Oxfam GB, "The Human Cost of Small Arms: An Oxfam GB paper for the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, July 2001:" 3) in conflict zones and in peaceful countries alike.

2. Adolescents, in particular, are severely affected by the widespread proliferation of small arms, and the risk factors exacerbated by small arms can be all the more detrimental for adolescents (For more information of the situation of adolescents and conflict, see Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children. "Untapped Potential: Adolescents Affected by Armed Conflict, A review of Programs and Policies," New York, January 2000). They are often forced to undertake adult roles and responsibilities, but are often ignored by aid and support programs. The Machel Review 1996-2000: A Critical Analysis of Progress Made and Obstacles Encountered in Increasing Protection for War-Affected Children, a report describing the consequences of war in all its aspects, determined that: "Adolescents are at extreme risk during armed conflict. They are targets for recruitment into armed forces and armed groups; they are targets of sexual exploitation and abuse; and they are at great risk of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS. Although adolescents have been neglected in the delivery of health services, education, vocation training and life skills, they continue to be the greatest hope and the greatest resource in rebuilding war-affected communities. Their active participation in community-based relief, recovery, and reconstruction programmes will strengthen and sustain these initiatives while increasing adolescents' sense of purpose, self-esteem, and identity." (The Machel Review 1996-2000: A Critical Analysis of Progress Made and Obstacles Encountered in Increasing Protection for War-Affected Children: 3-4).

3. The Machel Review 1996-2000: 33.

4. The Machel Review 1996-2000: 2.

5. According to the ICRC study, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," the ICRC surgical database "analysis of the first 17,086 people admitted for weapon injuries reported that 35% were females, males under 16, or males aged 50 and over. Clearly, this figure is a conservative indicator of the proportion of people injured by weapons who were probably non-combatants and who received care under the auspices of the ICRC. A study in Croatia used death certificates and employment records to examine the civilian proportion of conflict-related fatalities and found that civilians could at most have accounted for 4% of the 4,339 fatalities studied." (16).

6. Oxfam GB: 5.

7. The Machel Review 1996-2000; United Nations Department of Public Information, UN 2001 Conference Brochure, March 2001.

8. The Machel Review 1996-2000: 2.

9. A recent study examining the effect of small arms on children in Uganda found that 53 percent of the conflict deaths in Kitgum Government Hospital between 1998-2000 were civilians. (Oxfam GB: 4) But more specifically the data from the four hospitals reveals that at least nine children were killed by gunshot wounds, and 17 wounded by small arms during the same period (out of an approximate 69 deaths and 538 injuries due to small arms). (Oxfam, "Conflict's Children: The Human Cost of Small arms in Kitgum and Kotido, Uganda:" 16).

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10. There are of course practical limitations and challenges to collecting small arms injury data, but as the ICRC study on injuries in Northwestern Cambodia from 1994-95 showed, if a viable methodology is created, information as to the type of weapon used to inflict an injury can be ascertained. (For more information, see International Committee of the Red Cross, "Arms Availability and the Situation of Civilians in Armed Conflict," Geneva, June 1999: 33-38).

11. Rachel Stohl et al, "Putting Children First – Background Report," Biting the Bullet Project, December 2001: 5.

12. Ibid.

13. Ibid: 6.

14. Stohl et al: 6.

15. The Machel Review 1996-2000: 10.

16. Ibid: 9.

17. Oxfam, "Under Fire: The Human Cost of Small Arms in North-East Democratic Republic of Congo," January, 2001: 16.

18. Berman and Muggah: 7.

19. Stohl et al: 5-6.

20. Oxfam GB: 7.

21. Stohl et al: 7.

22. Oxfam, "Conflict's Children: The Human Cost of Small arms in Kitgum and Kotido, Uganda:" 28.

23. Stohl et al: 7.

24. Human Rights Watch, "Reluctant Recruits: Children and Adults Forcibly Recruited for Service in North Kivu," May, 2001: 9-13.

25. Patricia Sellick, "The Impact of Conflict on Children in Afghanistan," Conducted for Radda Barnen, Save the Children Federation, Inc., Save the Children (UK), and UNICEF, May 1998: 43.

26. Stohl et al: 8.

27. Oxfam GB, "The Human Cost of Small Arms: An Oxfam GB paper for the UN Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects," July 2001: 6.

28. Berman and Muggah: 8.

29. Berman and Muggah, Main Findings: 3.

30. Based on Small Arms Working Group Fact Sheet, Small Arms and Humanitarian Relief, <http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/sawg.htm>.

31. Based on Small Arms Working Group Fact Sheet, Small Arms and Development, <http://www.fas.org/asmp/campaigns/smallarms/sawg.htm>.

32. Oxfam, "Conflict's Children: The Human Cost of Small arms in Kitgum and Kotido, Uganda:" 24.

33. The following paragraph is based on Stohl et al: 9.

34. Author interview with Jane Lowicki and Allison Pillsbury, staff at Women's Commission for Refugee Women and Children, New York, 23 March 2001.

35. Stohl et al: 9.

36. Eshete Tibebe and Siobhan O'Reilly-Calthrop, "Silent Revolution: The Role of Community Development in Reducing the Demand for Small Arms," Working Paper No. 3, World Vision International, Geneva, Switzerland, 2000: 40.

37. In Colombia, a girl recruited by guerrillas at age 13 revealed that she had used pistols, AK-47s, Galils, M-16s, R-15s, Uzi submachine guns, Ingrams, and a .357 Magnum. She said, 'in the organization, you understand that your life is your weapon, it is your mother, it watches out for you day and night.' (Human Rights Watch, "War Without Quarter" Colombia and International Humanitarian Law, October, 1998: 196).

38. Jo Becker, "Small Arms and Child Soldiers," Presentation at Workshop for "Putting Children First: Building a Framework for International Action to Address the Impact of Small Arms," New

York, 20 March 2001.

39. Ibid.

40. Interview by UNHCR and UNICEF staff in Guéckédou, Guinea, May 2001.

41. Armed commanders in Uganda provide new child recruits three to six months of infantry and weapons training: "We trained them rapidly. The important thing was to learn how to use and maintain firearms." (Human Rights Watch, "Uganda in Eastern DRC: Fueling Political and Ethnic Strife," New York, March 2001: 25).

42. Stohl et al: 10.

43. Becker.

44. Stohl et al: 10.

45. Becker. For example, in the Goma area of Congo, "Rwandan backed rebels did not have enough arms for each soldiers, so deployed children unarmed as a diversionary force. The children would be instructed to take sticks and beat on trees. They drew the fire of the opposition, allowing older, armed combatants to attack from a different direction." (Becker).

46. The report is available at [www.child-soldiers.org](http://www.child-soldiers.org).

47. Technically, *madrasas* are informal educational institutions that are intended to serve poor students. However, some *madrasas* are "run by different religious sects, political parties and factions affiliated to warring factions in Afghanistan, Jammu, and Kashmir." (Stohl, Rachel, "Children on the Front Line: Child Soldiers in Afghanistan," Center for Defense Information, 15 October 2001, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/childsoldiers.cfm>).

48. Rachel Stohl, "Children on the Front Line: Child Soldiers in Afghanistan," Center for Defense Information, 15 October 2001, <http://www.cdi.org/terrorism/childsoldiers.cfm>.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid.

51. Rachel Stohl, "Small Arms Impact Children Around the World," Weekly Defense Monitor, Center for Defense Information, 12 July 2001, <http://www.cdi.org/weekly/2001/issue27.html#2>

52. For a detailed program of action that encompasses these many issues, see Stohl et al.