

# Child soldiers essay



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A child soldier any person under the age of 18 who is a member of an armed force or political group (government or otherwise). These young combatants participate in all aspects of contemporary warfare. They wield AK-47s and M-16s on the front lines of combat, serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies, and act as spies, messengers or lookouts. Some are even recruited as sexual slaves. Physically vulnerable and easily intimidated, children typically make obedient soldiers. Many are abducted or recruited by force, and often compelled to follow orders under threat of death.

Others join armed groups out of desperation. As society breaks down during conflict, leaving children no access to school, driving them from their homes, or separating them from family members, many children perceive armed groups as their best chance for survival. Others seek escape from poverty or join military forces to avenge family members who have been killed. Many girls have reported enlisting to escape domestic servitude, violence and sexual abuse. For various reasons, it's impossible to give a global figure for the number of child soldiers at any one time.

Military commanders frequently conceal children or deny access to observers. Armed groups frequently operate in dangerous, inaccessible zones to which observers do not have access and many children perform support roles and are therefore not visible in military operations.

Unfortunately child soldiers exist in all regions of the world and in almost every country where there is armed conflict. The problem is most critical in Africa, where children as young as nine have been involved in armed conflicts. Children are also used as soldiers in various Asian countries and in

parts of Latin America, Europe and the Middle East. Ideology is an important element of voluntary service by underage soldiers.

Children, eager to be part of political or social movements in which their parents participate, often gravitate toward popular uprisings, especially if those uprisings offer a chance to exact revenge on enemies. The murders of family members, the ethnic cleansing of cultural groups, and long-time political and economic discrimination all fuel the hatred that can provide important motivations for young soldiers (as they do adult soldiers). Brought up in an environment in which politics, religion, and economic distress are interrelated.