Children and Armed Conflict

Children throughout Asia, as young as six years of age, are continuously recruited and used for military purposes; they are forced into children’s units within military forces; used as human shields, in suicide attacks, and in combat; and trained and used as couriers and informants and/or planting explosives on the frontlines against national security forces. In India, Bharatiya Communist Party required that seven villages within the Gumla district, Jharkhand state, hand over five children to join their forces (Children and Armed Conflict India). Due to the intensifying conflict in Afghanistan, since 2014, child casualties have risen 14%; one in four civilian casualties was a child. There have been 1,306 incidents verified by the United Nations, which is the result of 2,829 child casualties, an average of 53 children killed/injured each week. These casualties can be attributed to the Taliban, groups affiliated with ISIL, Hezb-i-Islami, and to the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and pro-Government militias (Children and Armed Conflict Afghanistan). Known attacks on populated locations have increased since 2014, including attacks on schools and protected personnel and hospitals, which specifically target health personnel and vaccinators. To decrease the use of children in armed conflict, the government has signed a safe-schools declaration, protecting educational facilities from militant conflict. Since then, the nation has accepted the declaration; however, 93 incidents have still been reported after the declaration was accepted (Children and Armed Conflict Afghanistan).

Proposals:

1. Issue military command orders prohibiting the use of children within armed forces.
2. Release all children currently serving under armed forces; initiate criminal charges in the International Criminal Court (ICC) against all ICC-affiliated military leaders who do not comply.
3. Implement “No-Attack Zones” within a 600-yard radius of all schools and hospitals throughout South and Central Asia by using state forces to keep children safe and reduce the potential of future conflicts.
4. Sustain and support campaigns to raise awareness and provide curriculum to teach the importance of safety and protecting children from armed conflict; 25% of all countries GDP must go towards supporting campaigns and awareness. The curriculum will be provided by the UN and countries have the decision to use the curriculum provided or to create their own. They must have a curriculum that is approved by the UN.

Conflict Resolution
The United Nations works to ensure peace and security on an international spectrum. The global fight against conflict-related sexual violence and children in armed forces are two main concerns of the United Nations and the neighboring nations. These concerns are a struggle globally; it is essential that these issues be addressed. Following close to a decade of armed conflict, Nepal engaged in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in November of 2006 - an agreement negotiated by the United Nations (Department of Political Affairs Nepal). This agreement marked the end of a conflict that had displaced many Nepalese, degraded the already poor economy of Nepal, and killed thousands. In the two years following the agreement, the United Nations remained a stable oversight entity, ensuring peace. Annually, the Under-Secretary-General for Political Affairs returned to Nepal and assessed the situation, essentially continuing the implementation process of the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Agreement. At the same time, Sri Lanka’s armed conflict had become an international concern; in 2009 the United Nations politically supported a similar resolution as to the one in Nepal, advocating human rights and a humane end to the fighting (Department of Political Affairs Sri Lanka). Sri Lanka has since been encouraged to adopt policies promoting political reconciliation and accountability regarding adherence to international human rights rules and humanitarian law, even through any recurring times of war. A current struggle throughout Sri Lanka is the lack of trust among communities following the fighting. Currently, a peacebuilding fund allows peacebuilding interventions to be held throughout regions affected by the ongoing conflict.

Proposals:

1. Finalization of the Nepal Comprehensive Peace Agreement by 2020, and further, more solid commitments to similar preliminary deals in the region.
2. Implementation of a curriculum in all South and Central Asian schools under governmental jurisdiction that teaches the importance of community, peace and trust; adoption of this curriculum must be begun by 2022, starting at primary school with annual implementation of the curriculum to an additional grade throughout school classes. A community peace and trust intervention will be provided from the UN, it is required that households attend annually.

Basic Sovereignty

At stake in this region are issues of basic sovereignty: to which state does a piece of land belong to? Do the inhabitants of that land wish to be their own nation, and, if so, is that potential nation viable on its own or with the support of willing neighbors? Examples of this can chiefly be found in places like Tibet, where residents of the “Autonomous Region” have been continually oppressed by governing China following the CCP’s 1950 invasion, which was in part for natural resources (What). As the years have progressed under China’s power, China has destroyed thousands of holy monasteries and killed more than one million Tibetans for their beliefs in the Dalai Lama. The denial of many fundamental freedoms continues today, and monasteries are now under the direct control and monitoring of the CCP (What). Ongoing conflicting contacts persist between China and Tibet’s aforementioned spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama. The Lama has worked to implement a peaceful and nonviolent solution; however, China is reluctant to negotiate a solution, even one of simple increased autonomy (Tibet). Far more militantly contentious is the triply occupied Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir and its
surrounding areas, where conflict dating back to Indian independence has led to a burgeoning movement for independence in place of what was once a sure desire to be part of the nation of India. While Jammu & Kashmir has its own state constitution, it must serve under India's Constitution before serving under its own (Sovereignty) This means that citizens of Jammu & Kashmir are first and foremost citizens of India; thus, they have no ability to legally cessate Indian suppression of their own basic rights (Anand). A third example can be found in three of the four members of the Community for Democracy and Rights of Nations, themselves zones of "frozen conflict" left over from the USSR’s dominance of the Caucasus regions. One of these states, South Ossetia, has become highly integrated with Russia in recent years - and has scheduled a referendum for complete annexation into the Russian Federation, to be acted on after the South Ossetian presidential elections of April of 2017. But this referendum is of questionable validity before it has even begun, due to the large recognition of South Ossetia as a Russian-occupied territory - it could become another Crimea. Abkhazia, another area formerly part of Georgia, is considered equally occupied. Nearby, the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic - an enclave inside Azerbaijan - is controlled by Armenian separatists and is of questionable status; some consider it a functioning part of Armenia, some consider it independent, and some consider it to be lawfully part of Azerbaijan (Fuller). In relation to these basic issues of sovereignty, in mentioned areas and in unmentioned areas of similar status, the following are proposed:

Proposals:

1. Countries and regions involved in the conflicts of the disputed territories of Kashmir, Tibet, the Caucasus, and other such areas shall individually conduct a series of multilateral talks with relevant nations, the purpose of which is determine to future status of each territory. To stimulate constructive solutions, a regional mediator country with no major conflictive interests in the involved territory/territories is necessary for each multilateral dialogue.

2. A commission shall be convened to identify the most pressing human rights violations in Tibet; China will comply with any recommendations made by this commission.

3. A commission shall be convened to investigate allegations of “surgical strikes” by the Indian military into Pakistani-held areas of Kashmir; India will comply with recommendations made by this commission, and Pakistan will comply with any recommendations requiring cessation of military activity on their part. A peacekeeping force will be implemented in Kashmir due to “surgical strikes”.

Works Cited


“What is China’s Argument on Tibet?.” Free Tibet, Free Tibet, freetibet.org/about/china-argument.