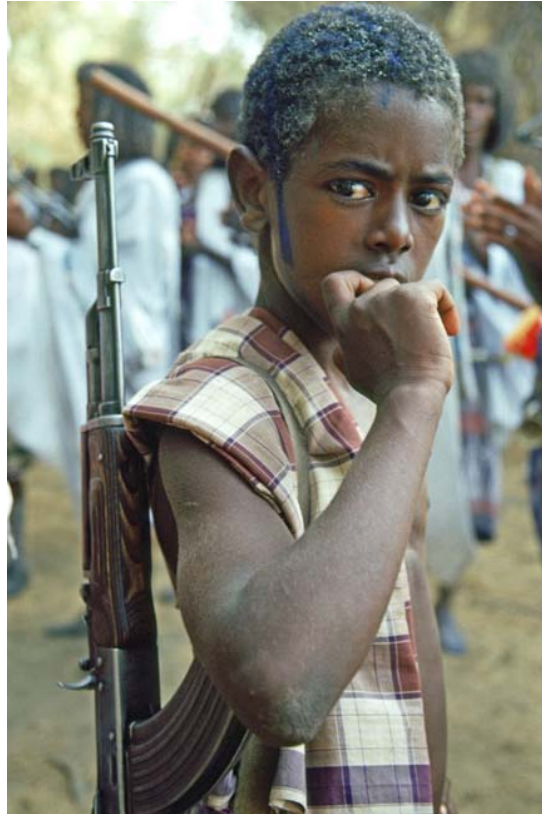


International aid organisations and child soldiers in Darfur



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Preface

Writing this final paper is the last assignment for my bachelor degree. In October 2007, the research for this final paper started and it became clear to me that writing this paper means more to me than writing about other subjects. This final paper is about a subject that really interests me, namely child soldiers in Darfur, Sudan. This paper is written to inform you about why they exist, the circumstances they live in and what, in my view, can be done to stop the recruitment of child soldiers in Darfur.

The civil war in Darfur is complicated and it takes time to understand why the conflict started. I have tried to write it down shortly and by doing this, I hope you can understand a little of what the conflict is about.

A war always has victims. And most of the time, children are involved. There is a shortage of food, clean (drinking)water, education and medical care. I have read many reports about the number of children who work as child soldiers for armed groups. Children cannot protect themselves against these circumstances so they have to be protected by international law, international organizations etcetera.

The situation in Darfur is a humanitarian disaster. International newspapers write about it, television stations broadcast programmes or newswatches about it, but the situation has not improved since it started in 2003. Thousands of people have died, thousands of children have died and all the media in the world open their shows or papers with, for instance, a train accident in France where three people were wounded but nobody died. Why are we abandoning Darfur? Why are we looking the other way and going on with our (good) lives?

I hope that you, when finished reading this paper, have a better insight about the situation in Darfur and the live of child soldiers there. Maybe some of you will sign a petition or join an international organisation, or at least think about the subject. Either way, when reading this paper I hope you are not looking the other way.

Evelien Bouwman

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1. Introduction

This final paper will be about child soldiers in Darfur, Sudan. I have chosen this subject, because of its dramatic humanitarian character. The civil war in Darfur has been one of the most internationally reported subjects. It has been a subject in United Nations meetings, the European Union and other international conferences.

1.1 Central question

This final paper will answer the following question:

- What can international aid organisations do to help child soldiers in Darfur? -

This final paper will include three major aid-organisations, namely UNICEF, Amnesty International and Warchild. All of these organisations have other goals, missions and work fields and can help a child soldier in different ways.

1.2 Sub Questions

Every chapter in this final paper will discuss a small sub-question, which will give enough information to draw a conclusion or to interest the readers in doing some research.

This final paper consists of five chapters, including this introduction. The second chapter will be about the country Sudan and the region Darfur. What makes this region different than the other regions in Sudan?

The third chapter will include three international aid organisations, namely UNICEF, Amnesty International and Warchild. What kind of organisations are they, what are their views on child soldiers and Darfur and more important, what are they doing for child soldiers in Darfur?

The fourth chapter will be an advisory chapter. What can these three aid organisations do to help child soldiers in Darfur?

The fifth and last chapter will consist of a summary, conclusion and an answer to the central question.

1.3 Description and justification of research methods

For this final paper, many reports have been read. These reports were not only the reports from Amnesty International, UNICEF and War Child, but also from other organisations like the European Union and UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees). The reports of other organisations are used as background information and to see other insights.

Besides all reports, also books are read as information for this final paper. These books, Dutch and English, contained general information about Sudan, international law, child soldiers, personal stories of child soldiers and aid organisations.

Furthermore, many old interviews are used. For instance an interview with Jan Pronk, the former UN-representative in Sudan.

The sources for this final paper are therefore books, reports, Internet and (old) interviews. The reason that I did not interview someone myself is easy to explain. This final paper is written to review the work of the three aid organisations and discuss my own recommendations. It is not written as a summary with copies of what the aid organisations or the people who work there could recommend. That does not mean that I have not spoken to a few persons of those aid organisations. The information retrieved in those talks were used as background information in this report instead of specific recommendations.

2. Child Soldiers

War has effects on all people in the war area. There is a need for food, clean water, shelter and medical care. These specific kinds of care and help are needed by many different people, like older people, women, disabled people and children. These groups often need more care and protection than others. Children are vulnerable people that can be affected more easily than adults. Children often do not know the difference between good and bad and sometimes do not see what is dangerous and what is safe. For that reason, children need special care.

2.1 Definition of children

There is not one universal definition for 'child' on which all countries in the world agree. There are many ways to describe a child and there are many different criteria. The most important factor is the age of this person. In some cultures, a child is every person under the age of 15. In other countries, a child is everyone below the age of 18, like in The Netherlands.

For this final paper, the definition of 'child', which is described in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations, 1989), will be used, because this convention is signed by many countries, including Sudan.

A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier. (United Nations, 1989)

Because Sudan signed this convention, they also agreed on this definition which means the must act on it.

2.2 Child soldiers

Emmanuel Jal was a child soldier in Sudan. Jal (2007) said the following:

When most kids were playing soccer, watching cartoons and learning how to read and write, I was learning how to fight. I left my home when I was seven after I saw a close relative raped and people's heads cut off by the government bombers. Death was in my face every day and I cried every day until I could not cry any more. The situation was so bad that I was forced to fight for our freedom.

At the age of seven, I was enlisted as a child soldier to fight in southern Sudan's bloody war. For years I was wielding an AK47, taller than myself.

Child soldiers are living all over the world, even in countries where you would not expect them to be. The term child soldier refers to a child, who is working as a soldier. There is no specific definition of a child soldier, but UNICEF (n.d.) uses the following:

A child soldier is any person under 18 years of age who is part of any kind of regular or irregular armed force or armed group in any capacity, including but not limited to cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups, other than family members. The definition includes girls recruited for sexual purposes and for forced marriage. It does not, therefore, only refer to a child who is carrying or has carried arms.¹

According to this definition, a child soldier is everyone under the age of 18, who has something to do with an armed group or armed force. One does not have to carry a weapon to be a child soldier.

2.3 Why children become child soldiers

Children in armed groups can have many tasks. They can serve as human mine detectors, participate in suicide missions, carry supplies and act as spies, messengers or lookouts. (Human Rights Watch. n.d.)

There are three different ways why children end up as child soldier. A child can be forced, coerced or voluntary join an armed group.

Forced recruitment means that children join armed forces because the particular armed group is a physical threat to the child or their family or friends. This kind of recruitment is used by government armies and militias.

They give you a weapon and then you have to kill your best friend. That is their way to see if they can trust you. If you do not kill him, he has to kill me. I had to do it, otherwise I would be shot by him. (Amnesty International, 2004)

Many children, especially in third world countries, do not have any kind of identification. This can be the case because it was destroyed in the war or the child was never officially

¹ This definition also includes the Dutch Army. In The Netherlands, you can join the army forces when you reached the age of 16. But, you are allowed to fight in battles abroad when you reached the age of 18 years old. When you are 16 or 17 years old, you can only start the education of being a soldier.

registered. The result of this is that there is no proof that this child (soldier) is under the age of 18.

Coercive or abusive recruitment is a vague sort of recruitment. It means that there is no proof of physical threat, but there is evidence that the children did not volunteer to be a soldier. This kind of recruitment includes intimidation and if that does not help, the child will be beaten until he 'volunteers' to be a soldier.

From the late eighties until 1992, around 12.500 Sudanese boys walked in the desert between Sudan, Ethiopia and Kenya. It was said that they were pulled away at a young age from their families by the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army (SPLA). This armed force wanted to ensure that there would be enough SPLA-soldiers in the future. When the Ethiopian government fell in 1991, these boys went back to Sudan. The Red Cross found them, but they could not find any evidence that they were working as soldiers. The Sudanese boys were sent to a refugee camp in Kenya, where the care workers thought that these boys had no idea of their national identity. They wanted to go back to their families, but the aid workers also saw that the boys together also became one big 'family' where they belonged and felt safe. (Cohn and Goodwin-Gill, 2003, p. 24 - 29)

Some children *voluntarily* join an armed group. There are a few possible reasons for that. When there is a war, often there is poverty. Children need enough food to develop. When children join an armed group, they are sure of being fed enough.

Another reason can be revenge. Picture that your family is murdered before your own eyes when you were a child. It could be the case that this child wants to take revenge at the (armed) group who murdered his/hers family. These kids can join the enemies of this group and take revenge in that way. (Gielens, 2006)

2.4 International legislation on the subject

Children were not always subjects in (inter)national laws or conventions. The first time that children were officially seen as a specific group of people with specific needs and rights was in 1924. In that year, the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child was signed. According to the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) children have the right to food, nursing and protection.

The Geneva Declaration became the basis of the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Child (1959). This declaration includes ten principles and rights of children, such as 'the child shall be entitled from his birth to a name and a nationality' and 'the child is entitled to receive education'. (United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Child, 1959)

Eventually, the declarations from 1924 and 1959 resulted in the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989. According to this convention, children should not be involved in armed conflicts. All countries in the world, except for the United States and Somalia, ratified this Convention on the Rights of the Child. (Duhaime, 2008) In Sudan, this Convention was ratified in 1990 (UNHCHR, 2004) without making exceptions for specific articles. (UNHCHR, 2001)

Article 38 of the 1989 Convention says that children should not be part of armed conflicts and that the States have the duty to respect and execute this article. (Verhellen, 2000)

3. Sudan

Sudan is a large country in Africa with around 40 million people. These people are divided into more different ethnic groups, like black or Arab people. But these people are also divided into various religions. Most people are Muslims, but also Christians and believers of smaller religions are represented in Sudan. (CIA, 2008)

3.1 Geographical situation



Sudan

Source: Wikipedia

Most of Sudan's territory is land and a small part of the area is water. The Nile and the Red Sea are the largest and most important waters in and around the country.

The capital of Sudan is Khartoum. This city lies is the geographical, economical and political centre of Sudan. (CIA, 2008)

Darfur is situated in the western part of Sudan next to Chad and the Central African Republic. (See map)

Sudan and Darfur
Source: Wikimedia

Sudan is situated in the northeastern part of Africa, between the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Libya and Uganda. Between Egypt and Eritrea, Sudan is located next to the Red Sea.

With 2,505,810 square kilometers of area, it is the biggest country on the continent.



Darfur alone has the size of France. This comparison makes clear that Darfur is a very big area. (BBC News, 2006)

The largest city in Darfur is Nyala. This city is situated in South Darfur. Nyala has roads, railways and a domestic airport and is therefore the most important city in Darfur. (Wikipedia, 2008)

Nowadays, a refugee camp is situated near Nyala. Camp Kalma is a forty-five minute drive from the city and about 75.000 displaced people are living there.

3.2 Political situation

Sudan is a republic. The president of Sudan is Umar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir (since 16 October 1993). The governmental seat is in Khartoum, which is also capital of Sudan.

The government has a multiparty-system. The GNU (Government of National Unity), the NCP (the National Congress Party) and the SPLM (Sudanese People's Liberation Movement) formed a coalition. Al-Bashir is a member of the NCP.

Sudan is politically divided into 25 states from which three are states that make up Darfur: Western Darfur, Southern Darfur and Northern Darfur.

Sudan was not always an independent country. Before 1956, Sudan was a part of Egypt and the United Kingdom. On 1 January 1956, Sudan became an independent country and since that day, 1 January has been the national Independence Day.

The Sudanese constitution was implemented in 1998, but was suspended a year later because of the civil war in South-Sudan. After the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005, the constitution was ratified in the same year.

The Civil War in South-Sudan ended in 2005 with the signing of the CPA, which gave South Sudan a government with certain powers for at least six years. After those six years a referendum will be held and the people themselves can decide if they want to be an independent country or if they want to belong to Sudan. In the six years, South-Sudan will be a part of Sudan, but they can lead their own part of the country. The government in South-Sudan signed their own Constitution in 2005. (CIA, 2008)

The government in Khartoum is pro-Arab and – Muslim, and the southern part of Sudan is more pro-African². This difference has played a big role in civil wars and national politics. (National Economies Encyclopaedia, 2007)

3.3.Economical situation

Most Sudanese people work in agriculture (80%), followed by services (13%) and industry (7%). The most important products that Sudanese farmers cultivate are cotton, sheep, kinds of fruit and potatoes, sheep and sugarcane. Sudan owns a lot of oil and this oil is very important for the Sudanese economy. The oil production is 344,700 bbl per day. (CIA, 2008) BBL is a measure for oil and one bbl (barrel) stands for 158.9873 liters. (Wikipedia, May 2008) This proves that the total oil production for one day in Sudan is extremely high.

The GDP (Gross Domestic product) of Sudan was a bit more than 97 billion American Dollars. GDP in Sudan has grown from 2005 – 2006 with 9,3 %. (CIA, 2008) This GDP is a tool to measure the size of a country's economy. It represents the total dollar value of all goods and services produced over a specific period of time. The percentage means that the value of Sudanese goods and services have grown with 9,3 % in 2006 (compared to 2005). In other words, the economy has grown with 9,3 %. (Investopedia, n.d.)

3.4 The Darfur crisis

From the nineties all countries, international organisations or media only watched South Sudan because of the Civil War.³ When this Civil War ended in 2005 by signing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, all countries, international organisations and media had discovered a new humanitarian disaster in Sudan, named Darfur.

The Civil War in South Sudan started in the fifties because the South Sudanese thought that they were treated differently than the Sudanese in North-Sudan and Khartoum. That civil war started because of the unequal development.

² South-Sudan is pro-African. This means that this part of Sudan is for a government with black African people. The pro-Arab and –Muslim government in Khartoum are not in favour of this black people's government.

³ Search for South Sudan at the BBC World website and there will mostly be articles about the civil war and the CPA.

The Civil War in Darfur started for the same reason as the civil war in South Sudan. The Darfuri thought that they were treated in other ways than the other Sudanese. Two rebel groups started fighting against the government troops. The Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) want to fight this unequal treatment and establish a country with gives equal rights to everyone.

The government gave weapons to the Arab-Sudanese militias, also known as the Janjaweed. The Janjaweed wants to clear Darfur from black Africans. The SLA and JEM are divided and negotiations with the government (and Janjaweed) ended without solutions or agreements. There was a short armistice in 2004, but the Janjaweed, SLA and JEM kept fighting. The Janjaweed were not only fighting with weapons, but it is clear that they also rape women and little girls, kill innocent people and burn down houses or entire villages. (We the women, 2007)

The international community tried to pressure the Sudanese government, but without results. The United Nations Security Council agreed on prosecuting all Sudanese suspected of war crimes. There would be a special Darfur-court in The Hague, The Netherlands. Al-Bashir refused to cooperate and trough that reason, the court has never been established. (Beurden, 2006)

According to a report of the European Parliament (2007), the government and Al-Bashir support the Janjaweed, which kills innocent people and rapes women and children. The precise relationship between the two is complicated to say. The government denies that they support the Janjaweed, but international organisations have more than enough proof that the Sudanese government is helping them. Al-Bashir refuses any kind of international prosecution of people suspected of war crimes or crimes against humanity.

The Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) is signed in 2006, but is it is nothing like the CPA as the title might say. The peace agreement covers security, wealth sharing and power sharing. The African Union has negotiated for a few years with the Sudanese government and the rebel groups SLA and JEM.

The African Union created a special implementation team to implement the peace process. Until now, according to the African Union Mission in Sudan (n.d.), implementation has not been finished.

According to Jan Pronk (2006), former UN-representative for Sudan, says that the DPA was already nearly dead when it was just signed. In general, he thinks that it is a good agreement but not all parties involved in the conflict have signed the agreement. "This further split the rebel movements", he says.

Pronk said the following:

Since the DPA does not function, violations remain unsanctioned. Most people in Darfur have lost faith in the DPA. Many did not have it from the beginning. We should be realistic. The DPA in its present form, even though it is theoretically a good agreement, will not get adequate support beyond those who have already signed. Therefore, we have to start new consultations. But we must avoid labelling these consultations as reopening of the peace negotiations. Talk, add, improve and give an opportunity to those who feel excluded and form at least one third of the population of Darfur.

4. Global Aid Organisations and child soldiers

This final paper is focussed on three international organisations, which work in three different fields. Amnesty International is a human rights organisation, UNICEF is about (the rights of) children and Warchild is a special organisation for children in war. This chapter will be about these organisations, what their relationship is with child soldiers, what they already do for child soldiers and what they already do in Darfur.

4.1 Amnesty International

Amnesty International is an international human rights organisation and was created in 1961. In 2007, Amnesty International launched an international campaign for Darfur. This petition was specifically addressed to the Sudanese government with the message to protect the population of Darfur. Besides that, a group of thirty musicians made the cd 'Make some noise: The Campaign to Save Darfur' to support the petition. (Amnesty International, n.d.)

Amnesty International is an organisation that makes use of petitions, campaigning and tries to influence governments, companies and/or other organisations. (Amnesty International, n.d.)

Amnesty International is an active aid organisation in and for Darfur. The project 'Eyes on Darfur' (2007) was created to make people alert for what was and is going on in Darfur. On the website of this project, information is published about the crisis, the international response on the crisis, the actions of Amnesty International and of course the project itself. On the website are also images of twelve vulnerable villages in Darfur through a satellite connection.

Amnesty International and child soldiers

Human rights also include the rights of children and these children are therefore a focus for Amnesty International. In 2003, Amnesty International Netherlands wrote a report about child soldiers. In this report, it is said that there are around 300.000 children that work as a soldier, messenger, spy, servant, slave etc. Often they are used for sex or cleaning up land mines. Amnesty International has been calling on action for child soldiers for years. Every year, many letters and signatures are sent to governments which recruit and/or use child soldiers.

It can also be the case that employees of Amnesty International visit embassies about the use of child soldiers in their countries with the possible result that these embassies contact their governments about this subject. (Amnesty International Netherlands, 2003)

Amnesty International is of opinion that people who (mis)use children as child soldiers, should be punished. But should (former) child soldiers also be prosecuted? Some children voluntary joined the armed forces and some child soldiers are recruited against their own will. Amnesty International is of opinion that if a (former) child soldier is convicted, this punishment should be short of time because it should be aimed at the recovery of the person/child in question. (Gielens, 2006) In other words, former child soldiers can be prosecuted, but if they are convicted for murder or other war crimes, their sentence should be as short as possible. This is the case because Amnesty International wants to give the children a future and help them rebuilding their lives. If they are punished for a very long period of time, the children's chances to start over their lives are taken away. When doing this, the former child soldier is punished for their previous actions but also has the chance at a better life.

4.2 UNICEF

UNICEF is an international organisation about children and is created in 1946. After the Second World War, European children needed food, health care and clothes. For that reason, the United Nations created UNICEF. In the period 1996 – 1998, UNICEF focussed on children in conflicts and the effects of war on them. (UNICEF, n.d.)

UNICEF offers children specific needs in more than 160 countries worldwide. Those needs can be food, medical care, education and clean water. UNICEF always works closely together with the local population, governments and other aid organisations.

UNICEF tries to create better international legislation. They think that there should be an international treaty or law that includes an article which abolishes the recruitment of child soldiers. (Gielens, 2006)

The United Nations, of which UNICEF is a part of, have many famous ambassadors that use their name to attract more interest of people for certain subject. For instance Angelina Jolie. She is a goodwill ambassador for UNHCR and she uses her status of being a celebrity and her name for a good cause. She is very active and she has made many visits to refugee

camps, she has met many country leaders and travelled all over the world for UNHCR. (UNHCR, n.d.). She visited refugee camps in Darfur and Chad and donated much money for humanitarian help to Darfuri refugees. (Vuijst, 2007)

UNICEF also has ambassadors that use their name for the good cause. Footballplayer David Beckham (AIDS), singer Ricky Martin (trafficking) and singer Shakira (Education) are all UNICEF-ambassadors.

Former-ice-skater Johann Olav Koss is UNICEF-ambassador for children affected by war, this includes child soldiers. (UNICEF, n.d.).

UNICEF and child soldiers

UNICEF is an active organisation in Darfur. Because it is an United Nations organisation, it was one of the first aid organisations that was allowed to enter the region. UNICEF has projects in Darfur on four different topics, namely education, health and nutrition, water and sanitation and protection.

UNICEF has rebuilt 2000 classrooms. Because of that, almost 125.000 children had the opportunity to go to school again. UNICEF educated teachers and financed 74.000 schoolbooks. Besides that, the organisation gave schools the equipment to offer the children some sport activities.

UNICEF has vaccinated many children to diseases like measles. UNICEF started 260 health centres to offer medical care to the Darfuri people. Some of those health centres were mobile centres, so those can be replaced if needed. People could also be tested on aids and HIV and receive proper treatment.

Hygiene is an important factor in treating diseases and avoid epidemics. UNICEF focussed on clean water, educating people on hygiene and train them how to get water out of the ground with a pomp.

Protection is a very important factor when we discuss the recruitment of child soldiers or the care for former child soldiers. Special troops of the African Union, which were situated in Darfur, received special trainings from UNICEF about child rights and the protection of children. Children got psychological help and teachers were trained to help children with their

traumatic experiences. UNICEF also assisted with the release of child soldiers in Darfur. Most of them are now in school. (UNICEF, n.d.)

UNICEF is an active and important aid organisation in Darfur. But they are focussed on child soldiers also outside the borders of Darfur.

In February 2007, countries came together in Paris for a conference to discuss the subject child soldiers. All participating countries decided on the 'Paris Principles'. These principles are about reintegrating and protecting children in armed conflicts. 'Free children from war' is a report that was written by UNICEF just after and about the conference in Paris.

This report includes a few facts about child soldiers in Sudan. It is said that child soldiers are used on a massive scale there. In the case of Sudan, it was decided to refer them to the United Nations Security Council. Since 2001, almost 95.000 children have participated in reintegration programmes worldwide. (UNICEF, 2007)

4.3 Warchild

Warchild is an international organisation about children in war and is founded in 1993 by two British filmmakers. When they returned from the war zone in Yugoslavia, they were shocked and they decided to use their film to help innocent victims of war. Warchild has two different offices that work together as Warchild International, namely War Child Netherlands (founded in 1995) and Warchild Canada (created in 1999). Warchild has also an office in London, Warchild UK, but this office has no projects in Sudan and Darfur. (Warchild, n.d.)

Warchild and child soldiers

In March 2007, Warchild Netherlands has published a report about child soldiers. This report 'Kindsoldaten, de schaduw van hun bestaan' (translated: Child soldiers, the shadow of their existence) is filled with general information, stories of former child soldiers, the case of child soldiers in Columbia and recommendations for action. Warchild's report is written to bring the subject under attention.

Shocking is the information about the number of child soldiers in the world. This report says that child soldiers are used in almost 75% of all armed conflicts. These child soldiers are

used in government armies, militias, and rebellion groups. Almost 80% of all child soldiers are younger than 15 years old.

Warchild is positive about the conference on child soldiers, which is held in February 2007 in Paris, France. Fifty-eight countries participated and denounced the recruitment of child soldiers. The resulting 'treaty', the Paris Commitments, contain guidelines, directions and principles that should be followed to prevent the use of child soldiers and how to let former child soldiers return to their societies.

Warchild supports projects, which are set up to help (former) child soldiers. These projects are not specifically for child soldiers, but also for other children. These projects include the development of the talents and social skills of children. Warchild supports projects wherein former child soldiers and other children both are present. These mixed groups can prevent that former child soldiers are stigmatised again. The projects are there to support the former child soldiers with reintegrating in society.

Warchild is of opinion that children do not belong in armed groups. Countries should protect their children and have the responsibility over them and their future. In some countries, the army is the only way to earn some money. Warchild thinks strongly that governments should offer more career opportunities to children and younger people, so that those children and younger people do not feel obliged to work for the army and other armed groups. (Warchild Netherlands, 2007)

In the Warchild report are some recommendations mentioned to help child soldiers. These recommendations are divided into more categories, like focussed on children, focussed on their environment and what can the international community do for child soldiers (mainly in Columbia)? (Warchild Netherlands, 2007)

The first recommendation is about identification papers. *All children should have a birth certificate and some sort of identification.* If all children would have those papers, it would be much easier to proof that children are used in armed forces. Al-Bashir denies that children are recruited and used in armed forces in Sudan. If all children in Sudan had some sort of identification, he could be proven wrong (or right).

Secondly, *all children should be informed about their rights.* This information can be given to them at schools, refugee camps or in others kinds of educational programmes. In these kinds of informative sessions, the kids could be told about the life of child soldiers as well. If they

know what this life contains, maybe they will stay away from armed groups and do not volunteer for a 'job' as a child soldier. Children who grew up in the West know their rights and can act on those rights. Children in Darfur, Sudan or maybe even almost every African country do not have the knowledge of the rights of children in particular. We, as the Western-world, need to share this kind of information with them to prevent them from being recruited by armed groups.

The last recommendation is about the international community. Warchild made some recommendations in the report for Colombia. Nevertheless, this recommendation can also be interesting for Darfur. *International organisations and press have to put Darfur on the agenda*. In The Netherlands for example, there was a Darfur-week in November 2007, called 'Tot zover Darfur'. (Tot Zover Darfur, 2008) All Dutch media reported about this and everybody agreed on doing something against this war and for the people in Darfur.

It is now six months after this Darfur-week and again almost nothing in the newspaper, on the television or the radio is about Darfur anymore. The (inter)national organisations, of which Warchild, and the media should stay focussed on what is happening in Darfur.

Warchild describes their actions as follows: Warchild is an independent aid organisation that is devoted to work on a peaceful future for children in war areas. Warchild is doing this by focussing on the child's physiological well-being. The most important factor is the environment of these children. Creative activities can stimulate the confidence of the child. With dancing, music, theatre, and sports, children learn to express their emotions and war experiences. (Warchild Netherlands, 2007)

Warchild Netherlands is in its own country a well-known organisation. The famous Dutch singer Marco Borsato is an ambassador and he appears often on the television or in magazines to talk about his job as an ambassador of Warchild. Warchild Netherlands also organises many events (like the Friend for Warchild concerts) to call attention to children in war. (Warchild Netherlands, n.d.)

5. Recommendations

During the research for this final paper, it became clear that there are two kinds of solutions. Either deal with the source, in this matter the war itself, or fight the consequences. Children who work as child soldiers do not have the chance of getting an education. They learn how to use a gun, dismantle a land mine or cook. In many cases, child soldiers die in combat or when they have to dismantle a mine. Dealing with the consequences does not stop the recruitment of child soldiers. That is why this final paper focusses on the source. How can aid-organisations stop this war in Darfur or stop the recruitment of child soldiers?

Dealing with the source means dealing with the war. Tackling the problem of child soldiers when dealing with the source means that the motifs of war has to be taken away.

Why did the war in Darfur start? In chapter 3, this was already discussed. The Darfuri people feel neglected by the government in Khartoum and treated unequal compared to other Sudanese regions.

How can be dealt with this motif and stop the war? The war in Darfur can be compared to the situation in Southern-Sudan when there was a civil war. The people there also felt neglected and treated unequal. In 2005, the CPA was signed and South-Sudan has its own government now. (European Parliament, 2007) It can be the case that the Darfuri people see Southern-Sudan as an example as a way to retrieve their freedom. The war in Southern-Sudan ended in 2005. It could be interesting to see how this war ended and maybe find a solution to stop the war in Darfur.

The civil war in South-Sudan ended in 2005 when signing the CPA which gave that part of Sudan an own government and a possibility to become an independent country in about six years. The government of Al-Bashir agreed on the terms that were mentioned in the CPA. Why he agreed has never been said. It could be the case that there was so much pressure on Al-Bashir and the Sudanese government, because of this war and the war which started in Darfur in 2003, that Al-Bashir decided to settle in the Southern-Sudan civil war. International pressure is therefore a method which can be used successfully to end a war.

China can also play an important role in ending the Darfur-war. In an interview with the Dutch magazine 'Vrij Nederland' Alex de Waal, director of the human rights organisation Justice for Africa, said that China has the most influence in Khartoum. According to him, China has bought half of the Sudanese oil-export. These deals will contain billions of dollars. The

Chinese president, Hu Jintao, has been in Sudan last year. He and Al-Bashir did not talk about the situation in Darfur, but about a new palace for Al-Bashir. And every proposition in the United Nations Security Council has ended with a veto of China. (Botje, 2007) This proves that the veto-system of the Security Council is holding up any help or solution for Darfur.

5.1 Recommendations for aid organisations

Besides the general recommendations how to help child soldiers, there are also some recommendations specifically for aid organisations. These recommendations are linked to what the three aid organisations are already doing for child soldiers in general or in Darfur. These recommendations will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

5.1.1 Recommendations for Amnesty International

Amnesty International is already an organisation which is active for Darfur. Chapter 4 of this final paper included their campaign 'Eyes on Darfur'. Amnesty International is focussing on human rights and if countries hold themselves to those rights. Sudan has signed the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), so the country has agreed on not involving children under the age of eighteen in armed conflicts. Unfortunately, Al-Bashir denies the 'fact' that children under the age of eighteen are recruited and used in the governments' army or militias like the Janjaweed. There is no official proof of child soldiers in Sudan, but almost all active organisations in Darfur are confirming this 'fact'.

Amnesty International is well-known for their petitions. There is also a petition for Darfur to stop the war. It is almost unthinkable that Al-Bashir is not familiar with this petition, but maybe he does not care about it. Amnesty has to make this petition more known. When people know about this petition, they can also sign it and maybe with more signatures Amnesty International can put more pressure on Sudan.

In my opinion, Amnesty International has to focus on China. If they really are the only one who can influence Al-Bashir and all other prominents in Khartoum, it can be worth the try. China is already in the picture when it comes to human rights because of the situation in Tibet and the organisation of the Olympics later this year. Amnesty International is also active for Tibet and has tried to put pressure on China, but without any result. The chance of

not getting any result for Darfur when pressuring China is huge. But maybe the only option, besides the petitions and the 'Eyes on Darfur' project, for Amnesty International.

Amnesty International can only help child soldiers when they deal with the source: the war in Darfur. They focus on things that can stop the war, not on food, medical care and education.

In chapter 4 was written that Amnesty International is an organisation which uses and starts petitions to put a subject on the international agenda. For the Darfur-case, Amnesty International could start a project (this could be a petition) to pressure China in influencing Sudan. In 2008, China has been in negatively in the news because of Tibet and the Olympics. China cannot use any more bad publicity because of those negative headlines. The Olympics are very important and some politicians already said to not attend the Olympics because of the situation in Tibet. If Amnesty International can put Sudan (in relation to China) on the international agenda, it could be that more politicians (or even sports players) are not going to this Olympic event in China.

As mentioned before, Amnesty International is an organisation on human rights. The international community believes and has proof of the 'fact' that child soldiers are used in Sudan, both by the government army and the rebel groups. Many children in Sudan do not have official documents of birth or identification. (Sudan Vision, 2007) If Amnesty International wants to prove officially that children are used in armed conflicts in Darfur, they need all children (and people) to have these kind of official documents. Amnesty International is known for pressuring governments, so they can pressure the Sudanese government for this.

5.1.2 Recommendations for UNICEF

As mentioned before, the United Nations are watching Sudan and Darfur closely. The United Nations Security Council cannot do much for Darfur, because of the vetos of China. Special UN-organisations, like UNICEF try to help refugees, children and child soldiers. This organisation fights the consequences of war. They supply food, water and medical care and they work together with other aid organisations. As mentioned in chapter 4, this UN-organisation is very active in refugee camps in Darfur. They are helping with education, health, water, protection etc.

UNICEF is a very well-known organisation and they work with a lot of respect from other organisations and people. Can they use that respect to create more interest from all world citizens for child soldiers in general?

The ambassadors of the United Nations and UNICEF attract a lot of attention. A few of these ambassadors were named in chapter 4, like Johann Olav Koss which is UNICEF-ambassador for children affected by war. However, his attention cannot be for 100% focussed on child soldiers. That is why UNICEF should have an ambassador only for child soldiers.

This ambassador (which probably will be a celebrity) can attract the media and focus the attention on child soldiers. Child soldiers should be helped in other ways than children which are in other ways affected by war, like being a refugee and do not have enough food, water and education. Child soldiers have other specific needs, like protection and help to get them out of the armed groups. UNICEF already has freed many child soldiers in Darfur, so this is something that UNICEF has to keep on doing. Besides that it can be helpful if UNICEF appoints an ambassador for child soldiers. This ambassador can help to focus the attention on the liberation of children from armed groups.

5.1.3 Recommendations for Warchild

Warchild is a relatively small organisation, compared to UNICEF and Amnesty International, but this kind of organisations can have major influences or impacts.

Warchild focuses on all children which are affected by war, thus also on child soldiers. The Friend for Warchild concerts and Borsato's ambassadorship, which were discussed in chapter 4, have attracted many new financial supporters and much attention in the media.

The report 'Kindsoldaten, de schaduw van hun bestaan' is mentioned in chapter 4. The third recommendation of this report was that there was not enough attention in the media. As said before, Warchild is a relatively small organisation. But with organising the Friend for Warchild concerts in The Netherlands, they attract many kinds of media. Information about these concerts is published in newspapers; there are interviews with the organising staff on television etc. For next year, it can be an advice to broadcast this concert live on television. A consequence of this live broadcasting can be that there will be more awareness under the population or that people join organisations like Warchild. This all can result into more

donations, with which Warchild can help child soldiers of other children which are affected by wars.

These concerts are only held in The Netherlands. If these concerts are a success here, why not try it in Canada and London? This can result in more media attention or awareness for child soldiers (in Darfur or worldwide) in those countries as well.

6. Conclusion

The subject of this final paper is child soldiers in Darfur. This final paper is based on many articles, many documentaries and information on the Internet. The history of the civil war in Darfur is not easy to understand. Whomever that has read this final paper could be more interested in the subject than before reading it. That is the goal that hopefully can be achieved with writing this paper.

6.1 Conclusion and answering my central question

This final paper will answer the following question:

- What can international aid organisations do to help child soldiers in Darfur? -

In every chapter of this final paper, different sub themes are discussed and these were very helpful with answering the central question. The sub themes were:

- the country Sudan and the region Darfur
- three international aid organisations (Amnesty International, UNICEF and Warchild).
What are their views on child soldiers and what are they doing for them?
- What can these three aid-organisations do more to help child soldiers?

What can international aid organisations do to help child soldiers in Darfur?

During the research, the focus has been on Amnesty International, UNICEF and Warchild. Because these three organisations have completely different working fields, all three will be discussed individually.

Amnesty International has to focus on pressuring the Sudanese government. The Sudanese government, as mentioned before, denies that children are used in armed groups in Darfur. Because Sudanese children do not have official documents of birth or identification, there is no official proof besides all reports from international organisations. If Amnesty International wants to proof officially that children are used in armed conflicts in Darfur, all children need to have these kinds of official documents. Amnesty International can pressure the Sudanese government for doing this.

Besides that, China can play an important role in the Darfur conflict. China imports much oil from Sudan and has influence in Khartoum. So one recommendation will be that Amnesty International could pressure China to help them and together pressure Sudan.

UNICEF is an organisation for children and is mainly focussed on legislation and immediate care in war-areas. They are represented in the refugee camps in Darfur and Chad; they have to keep doing that.

UNICEF has many goodwill ambassadors which use their famous names to help others. Strangely enough, UNICEF does not have a special ambassador for child soldiers. If they do that, this celebrity can attract the media and focus all attention on child soldiers.

Warchild is an organisation about children in war. They wrote a report with recommendations to help children in armed conflicts. The recommendations are:

- All children should have a birth certificate and some sort of identification;
- Children should be informed about their rights;
- International organisations and press have to put Darfur on the agenda.

They have to do something with those recommendations. It could be an idea that Warchild is going to work together with UNICEF and Amnesty International on those three recommendations. All three organisations have different goals and work fields, so together they can form a complete cooperation network which has knowledge of human rights, legislation on and for children and children in war.

Together there could be accomplished more than alone. They can attract more media attention, which will be needed to lay more pressure on the government in Sudan. They can spend their money in better ways. Otherwise, every organisation has to do their own research and it can be the case that the same results come out of those three researches. If organisations work together and have one major investigation, it will cost less money and hopefully have better results.

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