Child Soldiers or War Affected Children? Why the Formerly Abducted Children of Northern Uganda are not Child Soldiers

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Abstract

In many places around the globe, over many centuries, adults have forcibly involved children in war. In more recent times, these forcibly involved children have come to be collectively referred to as ‘child soldiers’, in an attempt to address the crises that these children experience within war conditions. However, recent ¢eld experiences from northern Uganda show that children, formerly abducted by the Lord’s Resistance Army, as well as the community they return to, do not consider themselves as soldiers. This paper explains the reasons why the children reject this categorization prefer to be regarded as war a¡ected. This paper concludes with the warning that erroneouscategorisation of war a¡ected children mightin£uence, and/or undermine, the electiveness of targeted intervention programmes.

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