Norwegian University
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Free From War

An assessment of DDR/R programmes in South Sudan and DRC: The effects of the "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign

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International Development Studies

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Declaration

I, Erna Rósa Eyþórsdóttir, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature…………………………..
Date…………………………………

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Litla Skott, who will be born in November. Thank you for giving me great joy and for making me a stronger person. Being able to finish a master thesis while experiencing morning sickness, fatigue and caffeine withdrawals has made me realise that I can to do anything. I am so excited to meet you.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This study examines and evaluates the process of the DDR/R programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan and how these programmes contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and prevent recruitment of children. In addition, the study will examine the process of the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in both countries and the effects of the United Nations "Children, Not Soldiers" campaign on these programmes. Data for this study was mainly collected through secondary literature and empirical data was collected by using qualitative approach where the researcher conducted two unstructured interviews with UNICEF specialists for further analysis.

The main results were that both South Sudan and DRC have faced huge obstacles in their efforts to implement effective DDR/R programmes causing combatants either to wait a long time for reintegration or not participating in the programme at all. Nonetheless, the DDR/R programme in DRC affected the substantial increase in the numbers of children separated from armed groups and forces in 2015 and the agreement between the Cobra Faction and the government of South-Sudan also affected the release of large numbers of children.

Despite many obstacles like funding and ongoing conflict, The Release and Reintegration programmes assist large numbers of CAAFG in both DRC and South Sudan where they receive medical care, psychosocial support, education, social skills training and reintegration support where the child protection agents mediate with the children's communities in order to prevent blame and stigma. These programmes therefore contribute greatly to sustainable peacebuilding and prevention of recruitment and re-recruitment of children.

The Children, Not Soldiers campaign is a huge contribution to sustainable peacebuilding and the prevention of child recruitment in South Sudan and DRC. The campaign has gained a compliance from both countries who have signed action plans where they commit to ending recruitment and use of children by their military forces. Both countries have made efforts to achieve some of the key actions listed in the action plan but South Sudan´s government forces are still recruiting children. DRC however, has stopped recruiting children to their military forces. The campaign has affected the release of large numbers of children through the Release and Reintegration Programmes in both countries. These programmes are coordinated by UNICEF in cooperation with the governments and NGO´s.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADF/NALU	Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda
CAAFG	Children associated with armed forces and groups
CONADER	Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
DDR/R	Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FNL	National Liberation Forces
FRPI	Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri
IDDRS	Integrated DDR Standards
LRA	Lord´s Resistance Army (Uganda)
MDRP	Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
NDDRC	National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
NGO	Non-governmental organization
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SDDRC	Southern Sudan Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission
SPLA	Sudan People´s Liberation Army
SPLA-IO	Sudan People´s Liberation Army in Opposition
SPLM	Sudan People´s Liberation Movement
SSDM/A-CF	The South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army-Cobra Faction
UN	United Nations
UNDDR	United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children´s Fund
UNITA	National Union for the Total Independence of Angola
WFP	World Food Program

Part I: Method, Theory and Context

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0. Introduction and Background

It is estimated that group leaders and armed forces use tens of thousands of children for warfare in conflict areas, some even younger than ten years old. These group leaders and commanders use the children for various purposes for example as cooks, porters, messengers, fighters, spies or for sexual purposes (Paris Principles, 2007). In addition of losing their families, opportunities for education and their childhood, many of the recruited children suffer from being enslaved, raped, maimed, tortured, orphaned and forced to commit atrocities (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011). Leaders of armed groups and forces at times force or manipulate recruited children to witness or take part in killings, torture, bombings, executions and massacres, even of their own family members. As a result, these children are considered by the international community, as both victims and perpetrators of violence (Betancourt et al., 2010).

After the children have been released from military forces and armed groups they may be at risk because local communities may blame and stigmatize children for the crimes they were forced to commit while they were associated with armed forces or armed groups (Bayer, Klasen & Adam, 2007). Consequently, many former CAAFG are afraid to seek outside help because they could be identified as former child soldiers and be punished for the crimes they committed (Zia-Zarifi, Neistat & Becker, 2007). According to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (2014) there is a great need for resources to release and reintegrate children who have been exposed to violence and have suffered a long-term psychological impact due to association with armed forces and groups.

The programmes for reintegrating ex-combatants are called DDR/R programmes (Disarmament, Demobilization, Reinsertion and Reintegration). The objective of DDR/R programmes is to pave the way for recovery and development in post-conflict environments by dealing with the post-conflict security problem that arises when former combatants leave armed groups or militias and try to adjust to normal life during the transition period from conflict to peace (United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource

Centre, 2016). During the formal adult DDR/R process it is likely that the children associated with the armed group will be released as well but the needs of children are different from adult combatants and therefore it is necessary to address their needs differently. The children are therefore released through a Release and Reintegration programme that is specifically designed to support their needs while they are reintegrated back to their families (United Nations IAWG-DDR, 2014).

DDR/R programmes in the world vary greatly and each programmes can face various challenges. The South Sudan´s DDR/R programme of 2006, when the SPLA conducted a forcible civilian disarmament operation, is an example of a DDR/R programme who failed due to many obstacles. The SPLA managed to collect three thousand weapons but the programme was lacking structure and security guarantees. The approach of the disarmament was militaristic and the whole campaign was too political and ethnically focused. This caused a rebellion among the targeted communities and a bloody military action that cost sixteen-hundred people their lives (Daboh, Fatoma & Kuch, 2010).

In March, 2014 Leila Zerrougui, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict launched a campaign called "Children, Not Soldiers" in cooperation with UNICEF, the United Nations Children's Fund. The goal of the campaign is to end recruitment and use of children by government security forces before the end of 2016 (The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014). The campaign also focuses on ending recruitment and use of children by armed groups (Wirth, 2015).

The aim is to reach that goal by mobilizing political support and providing technical assistance to the governments that want to ensure that their military forces are not recruiting children. Eight governments of countries that are listed by the UN for using children in armed conflict are included in the campaign. These countries are Chad, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). As part of the campaign the Special-Representative in cooperation with other partners has been pushing the governments to criminalize the recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups (The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014). This is a very important goal but difficult to achieve because despite treaties and international conventions armed groups and forces from over fifty countries are still recruiting and using children in their conflicts (Machakanja, 2014).

This study will focus on two of those countries listed by the UN, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The reason these countries were chosen for this

study is that both countries are ranked close to the bottom of the Human Development Index, both have a long history of conflict and political instability and have been affected by the colonial period. Between 2010 and 2012, both South Sudan and DRC deployed children under eighteen years old in hostilities as part of the national armies (Child Soldiers International, 2012). The Children, Not Soldiers Campaign focuses on these two countries because of ongoing conflicts and recruitment of child solders. Since these countries share these similarities it is possible to compare and contrast the process of the campaign in both countries.

The particular reporting period chosen for this study is from the beginning of 2014 to current time. The reason is the launch of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign in March, 2014 but one objective of this study is to examine the effects of the campaign on the DDR/R programmes in the two countries. However, the historical background of the two countries since their independence from the colonial powers will be addressed for further analysis of their current situation.

The purpose of this study is to examine and evaluates the process of the DDR/R programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan and how these programmes contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and prevent recruitment of children. In addition, the study will examine the process of the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in both countries and the effects of the United Nations Children, Not Soldiers campaign on these programmes. The goal is to understand the series of persistent actions and steps taken by organizations, NGO´s and local partners in order to achieve the goal to put an end to the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts.

As a master student of development studies, I consider this research project relevant to my field of study because ongoing violations of human rights, especially of children´s rights is an enormous barrier for human development. Like mentioned before, the international community has reached a consensus that children should not be used in conflict and therefore it is interesting to learn why armed groups and military forces are still recruiting and using children and how the process of ending and preventing recruitment is developing.

1.2. Research Questions

The central research question formed for this study is "How do efforts by the Children, Not Soldiers campaign to prevent recruitment of children affect the process of release and reintegration of CAAFG in South Sudan and DRC?"

Other sub-questions are:

1. Are the DDR/R programmes in DRC and South Sudan contributing to sustainable peacebuilding and preventing recruitment of children to armed forces and groups?
2. How do the DDR/R programmes in DRC and South Sudan address the case of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups?
3. Do the Release and Reintegration programmes for CAAFG in South Sudan and DRC protect the children from being blamed and stigmatized for the acts they committed while associated with armed groups?
4. What are the differences and similarities between the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC and South Sudan?

1.3. Conceptual Framework: Definition of key terms

Bryman (2012, p. 163) states that the concepts that are used for a study "are the building block of the theory and represent the points around which social research is conducted". This section will present the concepts used in the research questions along with definitions of key concepts used for this study.

Armed forces: "The military organization of a state with a legal basis, and supporting institutional infrastructure (salaries, benefits, basic services, etc.)" (United Nations IAWG-DDR, 2014).

Armed group: "A group that has the potential to employ arms in the use of force to achieve political, ideological or economic objectives; is not within the formal military structures of a state, state-alliance or intergovernmental organization; and is not under the control of the state(s) in which it operates" (United Nations IAWG-DDR, 2014).

A child associated with armed forces and groups: "refers to any person below 18 years of age who is or who has been recruited or used by an armed force or armed group in any

capacity, including but not limited to children, boys and girls, used as fighters, cooks, porters, messengers, spies or for sexual purposes. It does not only refer to a child who is taking or has taken a direct part in hostilities" (The Paris Principles, 2007, p. 7). Nowadays, the term child soldiers has been replaced by the term "**children associated with armed forces and groups**". This term was formed to avoid the perspective that combatant boys where the only ones of concern and that children eligible for release from armed groups and forces are: "a) those who remain with armed forces and groups; b) those who fled armed forces and groups (often considered as deserters by the armed forces/groups, and therefore requiring support and protection); c) those who were abducted; d) those who were forcibly married; and e) those in detention" (United Nations IAWG-DDR, 2014).

The term "children associated with armed forces and groups" or CAAFG will therefore be used for this thesis.

DDR/R "is an applied strategy for executing peacekeeping operation, usually employed by the United Nations and the Post-conflict government. It entails the physical removal of the means of combat from ex-belligerents (weapons and ammunitions, disbanding of armed group militias and rehabilitating and reintegration of former combatants into civil society, in order to ensure a possibility of a resurgence of armed conflict*" (Daboh, Fatoma & Kuch, 2010).

Disarmament "is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons of combatants and often also of the civilian population. Disarmament also includes the development of responsible arms management programmes" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006, p. 8).

Demobilization "is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces or other armed groups. The first stage of demobilization may extend from the processing of individual combatants in temporary centres to the massing of troops in camps designated for this purpose (cantonment sites, encampments, assembly areas or barracks)" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006, p. 8).

Peacebuilding is an "action to identify and support structures which would tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (United Nations Secretary-General, 1992).

Reinsertion "is the assistance offered to ex-combatants during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Reinsertion is a form of transitional assistance to help cover the basic needs of ex-combatants and their families and can include transitional safety allowances, food, clothes, shelter, medical services, short-term education, training, employment and tools. While reintegration is a long-term, continuous social and economic process of development, reinsertion is a short-term material and/or financial assistance to meet immediate needs, and can last up to one year" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006, p. 8).

Reintegration "is the process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. Reintegration is essentially a social and economic process with an open timeframe, primarily taking place in communities at the local level. It is part of the general development of a country and a national responsibility, and often necessitates long-term external assistance" (United Nations Secretary-General, 2006, p. 8).

Recruitment "refers to compulsory, forced and voluntary conscription or enlistment of children into any kind of armed force or armed group" (The Paris Principles, 2007, p. 7).

Rehabilitation refers to the process whereby ex-combatants are prepared to adjust to civilian life before they are reintegrated into their communities. Rehabilitation often takes place in cantons/camps for a period of three to six months where ex-combatants receive psychosocial counselling (Nduwimana, 2013, p. 5)

1.4. The Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided in to two main parts. The first part includes chapters one to six that cover the information on method, theory and context. The second part includes chapter seven to nine where findings, discussions and conclusion will be provided.

This thesis comprises of nine chapters. Chapter one provides an introduction to children associated with armed forces and groups, DDR/R programmes, the Children, Not Soldiers Campaign and outlines the purpose of the study as an assessment of the process of DDR/R and Release and Reintegration programmes in DRC and South Sudan and how these programmes contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and prevent recruitment of children and the effects of the United Nations Children, Not Soldiers campaign on these programmes. Finally, the chapter includes the research questions formed for the study and the conceptual

framework explaining the main concepts used to gain better understanding of the thesis. Chapter two explains the methodology used for this study and the challenges the researcher encountered with data collection and analysis. Chapter three applies in-depth information about children associated with armed groups and forces. Chapter four covers the theoretical framework explaining the relationship between DDR/R programmes and sustainable peacebuilding and recruitment of children. The chapter also discusses the formal process of how DDR/R programmes address the case of CAAFG. Chapter five provides a historical background of South Sudan and DRC including an overview of the key armed groups that are active in the countries. Chapter six discusses the Children, Not Soldiers Campaign and describes the campaign´s process in the two countries. Chapter seven provides an overview of the current DDR/R programmes in the countries including Release and Reintegration programmes for children and their main challenges. Finally, chapter eight includes a brief summary of the study, the conclusion and reflections.

Chapter Two: Methodology

2.0. Overview

This chapter presents the methodology used for this study like the research design, sampling approach, conceptual framework and methods of data collection and analysis. This chapter concludes with a discussion of the limitations and challenges encountered during this study concerning sampling approach and data collection.

2.1. Research Design

This study is largely based on secondary literature, for example recent reports from UNICEF, Leila Zerrougui (the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict), the United Nations Secretary-General and the Human Rights Watch to evaluate the process of DDR/R programmes and the Children, Not Soldiers campaign in South Sudan and DRC. In addition, for further data collection and evaluation, a small-scale qualitative study was conducted with two unstructured interviews with two UNICEF specialists.

2.2. Sampling Approach

Part of this research is to assess the relationship between the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC and South Sudan. Therefore, the focus was to get more in-depth data from a sample unit involved with the campaign and the DDR/R programmes in the both countries. Consequently, it was decided that the sampling approach for this study would consist of purposive sampling. The samples were selected in a strategic way because they were relevant to the research questions. Purposive sampling is a non-probability approach and therefore the researcher cannot generalize to the population (Bryman, 2012).

Since this research is mainly archive based it was decided that the sample size should be small, with about five interviewees. After making a list of eligible participants they were contacted through email to see if they were willing to take part in the study. Getting in contact with possible participants seemed more problematic then was participated and the researcher was often referred to someone else who was more likely to participate. The sampling unit resulted in two UNICEF specialists with knowledge of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and DDR/R programmes in DRC and South Sudan.

2.3. Data Collection

It was decided that two semi-structured interviews would be conducted individually. In that way the researcher was able to have the same questions for both participants but would be able to ask a follow up questions or ask the questions in the sequence appropriate at the time of each interview (Bryman, 2012, p. 212). Since it was not possible to conduct the interview face-to-face do to vast distance between the researcher and the participants, the participants were offered to choose to answer the questions through email or through phone call. The participants received the questions beforehand so they could decide if they wanted to participate in the interview and decide which type of interview they preferred. Using this method the researcher displays the will for more equal relationship between the researcher and the participants by offering them a degree of control over the research process (Rappaport & Stewart, 1997, cited in Hanna, 2012). The participants both decided that a phone-interview would be a better option. The time and date of the interviews were discussed between the participants and the researcher through email. It was estimated that each interview would take about forty minutes.

The questionnaire was structured with ten open questions so that the respondents could answer the questions however they wanted (Bryman, 2012). The questionnaire was structured with emphasis on the relationship between the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and DDR/R programmes in DRC and South Sudan.

The first interview was conducted through phone on May 1st 2016. Due to the participant´s tight schedule it was decided that the participant would contact the researcher when the opportunity presented itself. The second interview was conducted through phone on May 9th. As mentioned before the interviews were unstructured and therefore the researcher was able to ask follow up questions when it was necessary. The period of the interviews was between thirty and forty minutes.

Bryman (2012) states that coding is imperil for quantitative research where the researcher categorizes the material by grouping the answers into different categories and then assigns a number to the categories that were created. However, due to the small sample size, the researcher of this study decided coding was not necessary. The data obtained for this study was instead sorted and placed in relevant thematic area in the thesis for further analysis.

2.4. Research Ethics

According to Bryman (2012) an informed consent means that the participants of the study would receive as much information as they need to be able to make an informed decision

about if they prefer to participate in the study or not. Few weeks before the interview the participants were informed by email of the topic and the objective of this study, that confidentiality would be assured and personal details such as name would not be revealed. The participants were also informed that the interviews would be recorded. Additionally, the interview questions were sent to the participants.

Consent statement form was not used but confirmation of confidentiality and informed consent was given by email before the interviews. The participants requested to view the thesis before submission and a consent for that requirement was confirmed by email. Both participants are made anonymous in the thesis. Instead they are referred as UNICEF specialist and a UNICEF child protection specialist which is a reference the participants choose by themselves.

2.5. Limitations

Instead of fieldwork and qualitative interviews with people involved with DDR/R and the Children, Not Soldiers campaign in DRC and South Sudan this study is mainly based on secondary literature due to the difficulties to travel to the two countries. The main reason is ongoing conflicts in both countries. Therefore, the researcher was unable to directly interview children formerly associated with armed forces and groups or people working with the DDR/R programmes. Hence, the researcher was not able to go in-depth with this research like was originally planned. For interviews, the researcher contacted UNICEF but encountered difficulties with receiving replies which is the main reason for the small sample size.

Due to the small sample size this research relies heavenly on archived data. The small size of the sample unit limits the outcome of the study and does not reflect the opinion of other individuals involved with DDR/R programmes, Release and Reintegration programmes or the Children, Not Soldiers campaign in South Sudan and DRC. Should this study be repeated, the sample unit would be larger and would consist a broader range of participants who have different knowledge and experiences of DDR/R, release and reintegration of children and the campaign, for example ex-combatants, CAAFG, local NGO´s and international organizations.

Chapter Three: Children Associated with Armed forces and Groups (CAAFG)

3.0. Overview

This chapter will provide contextual information for the study by discussing the usual roles of CAAFG in addition to why and how children are recruited and used by armed forces and groups. Next sections will address the cases of girl CAAFG and examine how their experience from associating with armed groups or forces can be much more different than boys.

3.1. The Recruitment and Use of Children

The use of children in armed forces and groups is very common and in some armed groups children have constituted as one third of the tally (Johannessen & Holgersen, 2013). Many CAAFG are forced or encouraged to commit horrendous acts of violence like rape, torture, mutilation or even murders and many have been imprisoned for deserting their groups while other have been sentenced to death for military offences (Stott, 2009: Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers, 2007). Despite the fact that the definition for CAAFG represents only a small part of children affected by armed conflict, an awareness of recruitment of children to armed forces and groups is growing and has become a hotly debated humanitarian issue among policy-makers, the media and international organizations. This issue has been placed prominently in the humanitarian and human rights agenda because child soldering is a grave violation of children´s right and should not be tolerated anywhere (Derluyn, Vandenhole, Parmentier & Mels, 2015).

Recruited children are usually abducted, threatened or manipulated into joining armed groups. However, there are other factors that result in children being recruited. Many children join the armed groups voluntarily due to various reasons. Some children have been sent to join the groups by their parents and some children choose to join armed groups because they want to fight for a specific cause or ideology (Johannessen & Holgersen, 2013). Other reasons could be lack of opportunities or choice due to poverty or displacement. Some children join the groups to gain a sense of identity. Others join the groups to defend their community or because they witnessed their parents being killed or humiliated, family members raped or their community attacked (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011). In crises like the ones that are reoccurring in DRC and

South Sudan, children become the most vulnerable and during conflict the risk of recruitment of children into armed forces or groups increases greatly. There are many different factors that explain children´s vulnerability to recruitment to armed groups or armed forces. These factors can for example be socioeconomic inequalities, insecurity or cultural traditions (Child Soldiers International, 2012). Fighting for survival, tens of thousands of children have been forced to take their livelihood prospects into their own hands because of the lack of educational opportunities, poor infrastructure or any social assistance. These children are the most vulnerable to be taken advantage of. They are the most susceptible to abduction or being manipulated to join armed groups or forces (Stott, 2009). Even though compulsory or voluntary recruitment of children under the age of eighteen years old is now prohibited by law, experience has shown that these laws do not guarantee that children are not recruited and used in hostilities (Child Soldiers International, 2012).

The government or local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) often perform advocacy work for the children to be released. Nonetheless, the majority of former CAAFG are children who escaped on their own (Johannessen & Holgersen, 2013). The government is responsible for the action of armed groups allied to them and are therefore obligated to prevent the use of children by those groups. These groups for example operate in other countries and receive support from their government, are self-defence militias or can include irregular paramilitaries (Child Soldiers International, 2012).

3.2. Girls Associated with Armed Forces and Groups

It is not as common for girls to receive military training and be used as combatants compared to boys. However, many girls are used as combatants and are forced to witness and participate in atrocities, killings, looting sprees and abductions. The role of girls in armed groups is most often a cook, a porter and to perform domestic tasks like watching the children, collection of food, water and firewood in addition to being a wife, a concubine or a sex slave. Statistic show that girls are usually much younger than boys when they are recruited by armed forces or groups, with more than half of them under the age of fifteen. The reasons are believed to be the roles they play and because of earlier maturity. Nearly all girls associated with armed forces and groups have been subjected to sexual violence including rape, forced marriage and sexual slavery, many immediately following their recruitment and/or on daily bases. Numerous girls become pregnant while they are associated with armed forces or groups. In some cases the girls become ill or die after giving birth because of the absence of medical

care. Many experience the death of their baby due to complications with the delivery, poor health conditions for a new-born, the child is left behind or killed by the commander.

Very few girls are documented at demobilization processes even though boys formerly associated with armed forces and groups report the presence of large numbers of girls in the groups. Therefore, it is difficult to evaluate the number of girls under the age of eighteen associated with armed forces or groups. There are various reasons why girls do not partake in formal DDR/R programmes. Armed group commanders usually do not allow girls to partake because the girls are often considered as dependants due to their common roles in the groups as army wives or concubines. The group commanders also often hide the girls and try to cover up the fact that there are girls and women in their groups because they are aware that they would be arrested for acts of sexual violence.

It is considered more difficult for girls to escape armed forces or groups due to the fact that fewer girls are willing or able to face the risks of escaping, particularly if they are pregnant and might not have the health to escape or the ability to escape with their children and would therefore need to leave them behind. The husbands of the girls also often keep a close eye on them, therefore lessening their opportunities to escape. In addition to the danger and the fear of being caught and punished, the escape could include days or even weeks of walking and surviving on next to nothing (MONUSCO, 2015). According to Stott (2009), it is necessary for DDR/R programmes to address the social challenges of female former CAAFG differently due to the fact that most female CAAFG have conceived while they were serving. Stott (2009) suggests that the DDR/R programmes need to consider the girls as both returnees and mothers and they should be provided with special programmes for the girls and their children.

Chapter Four: Theoretical Framework

4.0. Overview

This chapter will discuss the objectives and the standard process of DDR/R programmes in addition to the standard process of Release and Reintegration programmes for children. In order to provide a theoretical framework for this study the relationship between DDR/R programmes and peacebuilding will be discussed in addition to the relationship between DDR/R programmes and recruitment of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. To underline the importance of Release and Reintegration programmes to prevent recruitment and re-recruitment of children, the issue of the psychosocial effects of children being associated with an armed group or forces will be addressed along with the issue of blame and stigmatization by families, communities, armed forces and national police.

4.1. The Formal Process and Objectives of DDR/R Programmes

Like mentioned before, the objectives of DDR/R programmes is to pave the way for recovery and development in post-conflict environments by dealing with the post-conflict security problems that arise when former combatants leave armed groups or militias and try to adjust to normal life during the transition period from conflict to peace. This process involves different dimensions like political, military, humanitarian and socio-economic. The programmes aim to assist all those who were associated with armed groups and forces, both men and women, boys and girls, unrelated to whether they participated in active combat or served other roles for example as sex slaves, porters, messengers or cooks (United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, 2016). In other words, the programmes are built to diffuse social tension and to assist people who are exceptionally vulnerable due to conflict, to build a new, secure life (Colletta, Kostner & Wiederhofer, 1996).

DDR/R programmes are divided into different but equally necessary components: Disarmament and demobilization is the process when the combatant leaves military life and reinsertion and reintegration is the process of helping the combatant to establish and develop a positive civilian life (Nduwimana, 2013). Projects aiming to assist former combatants are most often funded by foreign donors and implemented by local partners (Johannessen & Holgersen, 2013). The design of DDR/R programmes greatly depends on the country because of their various political and security conditions. The ability to implement an effective DDR/R programme depends on the countries pre-conditions that are, according to the

Integrated DDR Standards (IDDRS): signing of ceasefire or peace agreement, trust in the peace process, willingness of groups and parties to be involved with the DDR/R programme and a minimum guarantee of security (United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, 2016).

4.2. DDR/R Programmes and Peacebuilding

According to Berdal, (1996, cited in Knight & Özerdem, 2004) there is a strong relationship between DDR/R programmes and peacebuilding. If the reintegration programmes are well-organized and flexible the prospect of a long-term local, national or international peace is more positive. On the other hand, if a reintegration programme is not successful, it can cause increased insecurity at a societal and individual level, promoting the chances of demobilized combatants to return to conflict (Colletta, Kostner & Wiederhofer, 1996).

DDR/R programmes are also more likely to fail when authorities push for a rapid disarmament promoting the chances of increased insecurity. Therefore, it is imperative that DDR/R programmes are well funded and organized (United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre, 2016). An example of a failed DDR/R programme due to quick disarmament was a programme conducted in Liberia in 2004. The immense turn-out of ex-combatants for disarmament swamped the team and caused shortage of food and water offered to ex-combatants who many had to wait past nightfall to hand in their weapons. This caused a riot among frustrated ex-combatants that lasted for two days. The riot caused nine deaths, injuries and damaged properties (Daboh, Fatoma & Kuch, 2010). As can be seen in the case of Liberia, the process of these programmes can be long and complex and it is difficult to predict the outcome and to ensure a secure and good living conditions for ex-combatants (Colletta, Kostner & Wiederhofer, 1996).

According to Dudouet (2012) DDR/R of non-state armed groups is crucial for sustainable peace building due to the fact that peace depends on the state being the only body able to protect and control the country by using legitimate force. However, the success of a sustainable peacebuilding does not only depend on DDR/R programmes but it also depends on the promises of the state for changes and for more secure environment. Dudouet (2012, p. 2) describes the perspective of armed groups as follows:

> challenging state authority through the use of force does not represent an end in itself, but is envisioned strictly as a means of achieving their broader sociopolitical objectives. Their armed insurgencies are rooted in collective grievances against undemocratic state policies, often based on experiences of discrimination and oppression. Therefore, from

their perspective, their renunciation of force and the dismantlement of their illegal militant structures are interdependent with the transition of power towards more accountable and legitimate state institutions that can provide a more secure environment for them and the ethnic or social constituency that they (claim to) represent.

For armed groups the possession of weapons does not only serve as a physical protection or as a suppression mechanism but has various important meanings for them. It serves for example a symbolic role in creating the combatants identity or as a political role in creating a bargaining opportunity for a political concession (Dudouet, 2012). This shows that it is a difficult and frightening process for a combatant to hand over their weapons and to put their trust of better living conditions in the hands of the state. Therefore, is seems understandable that if the disarmament process fails, like what happened in Liberia, 2004 that the combatants return to the original position in the armed group.

4.3. DDR/R Programmes and the Prevention of Child Recruitment

According to United Nations IAWG-DDR (2014) the DDR/R process for adult ex-combatants is an ideal time to grab the opportunity to inform group leaders, commanders, combatants and ex-combatants about the negative effects of recruiting children and the possibility of a prosecution of those who violate children´s rights. With this method the group leaders and combatants cannot say that they were unfamiliar with the consequences of child recruitment or justify their actions.

In 2011, MONUSCO in DRC managed to send twenty-five thousand foreign ex-combatants (mainly Rwandans) to their home countries through their DDR/R programme. During the DDR/R process many foreign CAAFG were separated from the group and then sent to their home country. MONUSCO´s DDR/R programme consequently reduced recruitment and use of children by armed groups in DRC (Nduwimana, 2013).

Kiyala (2015) mentions the failure of DDR/R programmes as one of the main causes of failed reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups. According to Becker (2004) the lack of adequate security in the areas where ongoing recruitment takes place and weak support mechanisms in the children´s community for reintegration can facilitate re-recruitment of children to armed groups. For example in 2001, UNICEF demobilized 163 Congolese children from a military training camp in Uganda. It was not until 2003 that local NGO´s reported that the majority of the demobilized children had been re-recruited by another armed group and many had been killed during fighting.

4.4. Release and Reintegration Programmes for Children and the Prevention of Re-Recruitment

4.4.1. The formal process of the release and reintegration for children

According to United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre (2016), children associated with armed forces and groups should be subjected to separate DDR/R programmes from adults. It is not long ago that DDR/R programmes only assumed that combatants were adult male and that children were not part of armed forces or groups. Children were therefore, excluded from the programmes. Today, this misconstruction no longer exists among DDR/R programmes (Ball & Goor, 2006).

According to the United Nations Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Resource Centre (2016), unlike the demobilization process for adult combatants, the release and reintegration of CAAFG is carried out at any time, even before the DDR/R programmes are formerly implemented. The separation of CAAFG from armed groups or armed forces usually happen through; a formal DDR/R programme for combatants, a negotiated peace agreement or an action plan between the UN and the government forces or armed groups, an informal negotiation between the UN and the government forces or armed groups or when the children escape or are captured or released from the groups.

The formal process of the release and reintegration for CAAFG starts when the children are separated from the group. The children are then identified and their age verified by a child protection agent. If the children are under eighteen years old and are carrying weapons, they are disarmed and their group commanders release them to the child protection agents. Usually the children are brought to a transit centre or a host family where they will stay for a period ranging from few weeks to few months. During their stay, child protection agents trace the children´s families. The reintegration process begins when the children are reunited with their families (Seymore, 2011).

The Release and Reintegration programmes for children focus more on the reinsertion of the children into their society instead of focusing on the children´s accountability for their actions while they were involved in armed conflict. The goal of the programmes is to show CAAFG that they have other options in life then being involved with armed forces or groups. Before reintegration the programmes offer psycho-social support, education, training and an assistance for the children to develop strategies to improve their livelihood opportunities. The reintegration process for CAAFG is a long-term process and involves assisting and encouraging a reconciliation and acceptance between the children and their families or local

communities. This is particularly crucial for children who have committed crimes so they can acknowledge the harm or suffering they caused by their actions. If family reunification is not an option the children are placed in alternative care (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011).

According to Verhey (2001) the 1995-1998 Angola demobilization and reintegration programme for CAAFG was crucial for the prevention of re-recruitment of children by the rebel force, National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA). The prevention of re-recruitment was achieved an accompaniment and family reunification strategy where members of the programme accompanied the children through the whole programme until family reunification was accomplished. UNITA members stated that this strategy hindered their ability to recruit children.

4.4.2. Psychosocial effects on CAAFG

The social needs of former CAAFG and their communities are massive because of psychological challenges. These challenges can seriously impact the integration process of former CAAFG. These needs and challenges have been the highlight of research for more than sixty years but it is still debatable how this issue should be addressed (Stott, 2009).

According to the United Nations Secretary-General (2015) the long-term consequences of children associated with armed forces and groups are of great concern. These long-term consequences like mentioned in the United Nations Secretary-Generals report are what Schauer et al. (2003) calls a "building block effect". According to Schauer et al. (2003) twenty to forty percent of individuals that survive violent acts typically develop psychological dysfunctions. Repeated exposure over time to different types of traumatic stressors like witnessing or experiencing beatings, torture, murders, shelling, bombings, imprisonment, harassment, sexual abuse or rape has a high enough doze of trauma to cause "building block effect" on the individual´s risk of developing trauma-related disorder like PTSD. According to Elbert et al. (2010) this exposure to traumatic stressors can result in aggressive behaviour, especially amongst men and boys with combat experience. Instead of developing PTSD they develop aggressive appetitive elements of a hunting behaviour where they become easily aroused and exited when committing violent acts. Appetitive violence experience is defined "as the perpetration of violence or the infliction of harm to a victim that is aimed to experience violence-related enjoyment by the exposure to violence cues such as the struggling of the victim" (Elbert et al., 2010, p. 104). The children who develop this aggressive behavior have a better chance of survival while they are being held by armed groups. They also have a

change to go higher up the ranks in the group and become a role model for the children who often become fascinated by them. The process of changing an innocent child into to a violent killer can take about two to three months. This becomes a great challenge when the children are integrated back to their communities. If control has not been taught before they are integrated, in their eyes violence will likely remain fascinating and appealing. Therefore it is a possibility that they keep committing intentional violent acts when they turn back home (Elbert et al., 2010).

According to Betancourt et al. (2010) many studies have shown high levels of psychosocial problems like PTSD and other social difficulties among CAAFG who had recently been reintegrated into their communities. Sierra Leone´s Former Child Soldiers: A Follow-Up Study of Psychosocial Adjustment and Community Reintegration is a research from 2002 that was published in Child Development in July 2010. The research was conducted in 2002 and started with a baseline assessment of 260 former CAAFG. Each participant was exposed to extreme acts of violence while they were associated with armed groups or forces. Two years later the researchers re-interviewed the participants. The result of the study was that two years after reintegration, symptoms of hostility had increased for former CAAFG who had either wounded or killed someone while they were members of armed groups or military forces. The children who had been raped also showed increased symptoms of hostility and anxiety. On the other hand, despite these symptoms, the children showed higher levels of confidence and pro-social attitudes (Betancourt, et al., 2010).

Wessells (2014) states that children associated with armed groups and forces do not only develop PTSD symptoms but scholars have estimated that symptoms of depression and anxiety are also present in former CAAFG (Johannessen and Holgersen, 2013).

"Association of Trauma and PTSD Symptoms with Openness to Reconciliation and Feelings of Revenge Among Former Ugandan and Congolese Child Soldiers", was a cross-field research, conducted during the year of 2005 in rehabilitation centres in Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Participants were 169 former CAAFG. The main objective of this research was to explore the link between PTSD among former CAAFG and their openness to reconciliation and urges for revenge. The results of the research was that it is possible that PTSD hinders the child's ability to overcome emotions of hate, anger and revenge and therefore causes barriers to the children´s attitudes toward reconciliation. That could prevent both sustainable and a long term peace building (Bayer, Klasen & Adam, 2007). The Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (2011) concludes that for former CAAFG, understanding and

acknowledgment of their past wrongdoings is imperative for their state of mental, emotional and social well-being. By accepting accountability the children´s reconciliations with their families, communities or with the victims of their wrongdoings are more likely to succeed, paving the way for successful reintegration.

Hermenau et al. (2013) believes that psychosocial supports, including formal education and vocational training for children formerly associated with armed forces and groups are crucial for children´s perspective for the future and to prevent re-recruitment of children.

4.4.3. Blame and stigmatization

Group leaders often force recruited children to witness or take part in killings, torture, bombings, executions and massacres, even of their own family members. As a result, these children are considered, both victims and perpetrators of violence by the international community (Betancourt et al., 2010). This section discusses the issue of blame and stigmatization by the children´s communities, security services and the justice system.

Self-Demobilized children are particularly vulnerable to re-recruitment. Self-demobilisation is when CAAFG leave their armed group by themselves without going through any release and reintegration process. Without going through this process these children do not receive any socio-economic assistance and are at higher risk of being blamed and stigmatized by their communities (Kiyala, 2015). According to Nduwimana (2013) the child´s family members and key community members play an important role to the child´s integration process as they need to have capacity to advice and support the demobilized children.

Unfortunately, the communities into which former CAAFG need to be reintegrated often show mixed feelings like sympathy, hostility and rivalry. There are many cases of communities showing lack of acceptance of CAAFG. Some communities do not look at the children who have been forced to commit atrocities against innocent civilians as victims of violence (Kiala, 2015). Due to sexual exploitation and abuse of the girls associated with armed forces and groups the girls often choose to not participate in demobilization programmes because they believe that their community would stigmatize them and they would no longer have any social value. This is particularly the case if the girls have had children during their association, are pregnant or have been affected by sexually transmitted diseases (MONUSCO, 2015).

In many cases, children are made accountable for their past crimes when they try to reintegrate back to their families or communities. The intention to punish the children is often shown by the security services or the police because of their earlier engagement with the children when they were fighting with armed groups. Violence by the security services or the police can make the association with armed groups seem to be a better option for former CAAFG since armed groups are often perceived as "safe havens" for those who have committed crimes like violent acts, sexual violence, stealing or escaping justice (Kiala, 2015). These violent reactions by security services leaves children trying to reintegrate vulnerable for re-recruitment.

According to Kiyala (2015) non-reintegration is a recurring issue among demobilised CAAFG. Non-reintegration is when CAAFG do not turn back home after they demobilize from armed groups. There are various reasons for non-reintegration. Former CAAFG might be afraid of being called to account for their past crimes when their return home causing them not to reintegrate. Another cause of non-reintegration it that the child has made ties of friendship with other combatants or even somebody higher up the chain of command. Some former CAAFG end up committing crimes or violence after their leave their group. This often happens when the children experience lack of security, opportunities or livelihoods.

The issue of age raises concerns because many children are associated with armed forces or groups for a long period of time and when they escape or are released it is possible that they have reached the age of eighteen. Consequently, these adolescents are no longer counted as children at the time of demobilization and are therefore not eligible for entering a Release and Reintegration programmes for children, even though they were deprived of normal childhood development and socialization skills that children usually gain from their families and their communities (Verhey, 2001).

CAAFG are often deemed to be a security threat and are therefore held under administrative or military detention. In many countries, numbers of children have been held for their association with armed groups instead of being offered to join a DDR/R program. Detention of children can have immense effects on their physical and mental health. Detention can cause high rates of anxiety, symptoms of PTSD or depression among children. The children are likely to face ill-treatment, violence, sexual assault or even torture at the hands of the guards or other detainees. This is particularly common if the children are detained with adults. Some detention centres are very small, lack adequate sanitation and lack services like counselling, psychosocial supports or education (Bochenek, 2016). Some children are subjected to prosecution under national criminal law and can be detained for a

long time waiting for trial or until the armed conflict is over. This issue occurs particularly in countries where national laws do not specify the maximum period of detention (Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2011).

The possible effects of the children´s association with armed groups or forces like suffering from PTSD, anxiety or other psychological illnesses including being blamed and stigmatized by their communities, show the great necessity of separating children from the groups as quickly as possible and assisting the children throughout the whole process until they have safely and successfully reintegrated back to their families.

Chapter Five: Historical Background

5.0. Overview

This chapter will provide a historical background of the two countries, The Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. The reason is to provide further detail about the countries by covering their geography, history and current economic status. In addition there will be an overview of the key armed groups and security forces that are recruiting and using children in their conflicts.

5.1. The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

5.1.1. Geography

DRC is located in Central Africa. It shares its borders with nine countries: Angola, Republic of Congo, Central African Republic, Sudan, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Zambia (see Figure 1). The population of DRC is sixty-two million. The population is divided into many tribal and ethnic groups that speak around 242 different languages. Almost all Congolese are Christian; fifty percent of the population are Roman Catholic, twenty percent are Protestants and ten percent belong to a Congolese version of European Christianity called the Kimbanguist Church. Ten percent of the population is Muslim and ten percent embrace traditional Congolese beliefs. The country is divided into four major regions: Congo River Basin, Northern Uplands, Southern Uplands and Eastern Highlands (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007).

Figure 1 Map of DRC (Geographic Guide African Countries, 2016).

5.1.2. History

The Republic of Congo was created in 1960 when it gained independence from the Belgian colonial power. The country was seriously underdeveloped when it gained its independence. There were no African army officers, only three African managers in the entire civil service and about twenty university graduates in the country. There were no institutions of higher learning. Vast part of the population were poor, with limited education. Due to these matters the country was not ready for self-government independence started out confronting many grave issues. In the first week of independence the army mutinied against Belgian officers, Katanga was declared a separate state and there were numerous violent attacks against Belgian settlers, causing Belgium to illegally send troops to the DRC to protect their Belgian citizens. The UN and Soviet Union also intervened. In November 1965, Colonel Joseph Mobutu seized power (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007). In 1997, Mobutu was exiled and the Kabila regime was established (Weiss, 2000). Kabila´s regime only lasted for four years. In 1998, a group of Congolese army units, backed by Rwanda and Uganda challenged Kabila who was then assassinated in 2001. His successor was his son, Joseph Kabila (Oppong &

Woodruff, 2007). The Lusaka Agreement was signed by almost all parties in 1999 to end the conflict. (Weiss, 2000) An agreement was then signed in 2002 by the warring parties to establish a peaceful government (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007) but conflicts and heavy fighting continued to erupt despite signing of another peace agreement in 2003 (Nduwimana, 2013). Subsequently, DRC´s first DDR/R programme was launched. The programme was mainly funded by the World Bank and received assistance from various NGO´s. Unfortunately, the programme was not successful. The number of armed groups increased and conflicts continued to erupt (Vogel & Musamba, 2016). Tens of thousands of children were released from DRC´s security forces and armed groups between 2004 and 2006 as a part of the process to re-form a professional army for DRC. Due to the lack of effective mechanisms to prevent child recruitment, security forces have continued to recruit children, however at a much lower level then it was before (Child Soldiers International, 2012).

Since 2008 the number of armed groups in DRC has increased rapidly, from about twenty to seventy groups. Most of the currently fighting groups today are factions of previous ones. The main cause for this problem is the failure or absence of demobilization programmes, lack of military pressure and use of violence as political leverage. After the Global and Inclusive Agreement 2002 ushered in a transitional government, provincial and national parliaments and political parties multiplied. Political leaders resorted to using armed groups to intimidate their opponents and look strong. Additionally, the government formed a fractious army, FARDC to dole out patronage. Many discontented army officers defected to other groups, often supported by political opponents (Stearns & Vogel, 2015). MDRP, Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme is a programme that is no longer active. It was only active from 2002-2009 but it was the largest DDR/R programme in the world. This programme financed a demobilization and reintegration of 53,871 former CAAFG in DRC (Nduwimana, 2013) Child recruitment and re-recruitment in the DRC military forces and armed groups kept increasing in 2012 because of these recurring conflicts in addition that recruitment of children into conflicts remained unpunished in DRC (Child Soldiers International, 2014). In November, 2013 one of the most abusive armed groups in DRC, M23 was defeated. Several thousand combatants from M23 and twenty other armed groups surrendered due to their fear of military operations or because with M23 defeated some groups no longer had to defend themselves. The combatants surrendered at a dirty and unpleasant regrouping-site in North Kivu where they had to wait for many hours after information and assistance. Many got tired of waiting and returned to their groups. The

FARDC and UN forces gave all their attention to fighting M23 which gave other armed groups the opportunity to step up their attacks on civilians (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

According to UNICEF it is estimated that thirty-three thousand children have been recruited by armed groups and forces in DRC since 1998. More children have been recruited in DRC than anywhere else in the world (ReliefWeb, 2009).

According to the Human Rights Watch (2014), the government of DRC and international donors have spent millions of dollars on DDR/R programmes since 2004. All of these programmes have faced multiple challenges mainly due to lack of long-term funding and community-level reintegration support. Corruption and mismanagement of funds has also hindered the success of these programmes. Since 2004, numerous actors have also been making efforts to release and reintegrate CAAFG in DRC. Since then about thirty-one thousand children have been released. Unfortunately, the process of these programmes have been undermined by ongoing conflicts and instability in the country causing the programmes to struggle with issues of follow up and re-recruitment of children to armed groups. In addition, the success of the programmes is jeopardized by lack of long-term funding due to the fact that many actors belief that funding for reintegration should be the responsibility of the country despite the fact that DRC faces numerous economic problems. Due to limited resources and ongoing conflict it is has been difficult for former CAAFG to have access to food, shelter and education. Impunity in human rights violations also hamper these programmes in addition to lack of state institutions and infrastructure (Nduwimana, 2013).

5.1.3. Economy

Many scholars believe that cultural diversity is one of the main causes for ongoing political instability (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007). On the other hand, others believe that the main reason for ongoing conflicts is not any particular ideology or a political agenda but constant fighting over natural resources and economic motivations (Gates & Reich, 2010).

DRC has rich deposits of diamonds, silver and gold, including industrial metals like copper, zinc, cobalt, manganese and tin. The country also has rich energy sources like petroleum, coal, uranium and natural resources, for example potential for hydroelectric power and timber. DRC has the second largest rainforest in the world after the Amazon forest. Despite all these rich resources the country remains one of the poorest countries in the world (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007). DRC is currently ranked in 176th place on the Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

Instead of using their resources the country´s main export is agricultural products and raw materials. Infrastructure in the country is lacking causing difficulties with transportation of products. Power and communication networks are also lacking. The reasons are that the country has been poorly governed, rich land has been torn and impoverished by war and the country is transforming its economy from self-sufficient to modern economy based on industry and commerce (Oppong & Woodruff, 2007).

In 2014, DRC experienced an economic growth and low inflation. This economic growth was driven by manufacturing and extractive industries, agriculture, commerce and construction. The rate of investments in the country has been growing and infrastructure has improved extensively. Even though DRC has made economical process they are still far from their 2015 Millennium Goals (MDG). In 2014 the economic process of the country had not yet affected the population´s living conditions. Unemployment is high, especially amongst the younger population. Because of poor infrastructure social and economic inequality is high (Mokime & Bamou, 2016).

5.1.4. Overview of Key Armed Groups in DRC

Here below is a list of some of DRC´s key armed groups and forces. A good deal of these groups rely heavily on children for their operations and many of them repeatedly recruit the same children (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). Currently operational armed groups in DRC are countless and according to Stearns and Vogel (2015) around seventy armed groups are located in eastern DRC alone (see figure 2). These armed groups are scattered throughout the Kivutian highlands and most of the fighting is clustered in small areas where different armed groups are opposed to each other. Some of the strongest and most disruptive groups are foreign groups that have illegally crossed the boarders and are supported by neighbouring governments. Some of these groups are fighting the government but others are fighting each other (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

Armed forces of the DRC (FARDC)

FARDC are the military forces of DRC. Despite governmental directives the group continues to recruit children to their forces and arrest and detain children for their association with other armed groups. Numerous children have reported ill-treatment during their detention. The group is also known for violence, rape and other forms of sexual violence, attacks on hospitals and schools and for denying humanitarian access (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

The Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR)

FDLR is the largest and the most influential non-state armed group in DRC. The group has about 1,000-2,500 combatants and has the largest geographical spread (Stearns and Vogel, 2015). The group is operating in eastern Congo and mainly contains members of Rwandan Hutus. This group has been responsible for numerous gruesome atrocities in the country. In February, 2015 the army launched a military operation against the group and an arrest warrant was launched against the group leader, Sylvestre Mudacumura (Human Rights Watch, 2015). In 2014 the UN documented sixty-three children recruited by FDLR and thirty-nine cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence by its members. The group also attacks schools (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015)

The Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU)

ADF/NALU is an armed group based at the boarders of DRC and Uganda. The group members were originally Ugandan rebels that fought as opposition to the Museveni regime in Uganda but now they have developed their agenda to Islamic means (ReliefWeb, 2013). ADF is a small group with three hundred combatants. Regardless of the small size, the group is responsible for many of the worst violent acts in DRC including numerous massacres of civilians (Stearns and Vogel, 2015). In 2014, thirty-eight percent of all child casualties occurred during ADFs´ brutal attacks. One in particular was ADF´s attack in Beni Territory where 250 individuals, including thirty-five children were brutally murdered with machetes, knives, axes and hammers. The group also abducted twenty children during 2014. In addition, the group killed three NGO staff members, one UN staff member and abducted two humanitarian workers. They are also known for denying humanitarian access in North and South Kivu and attacking schools and hospitals (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

The National Liberation Forces (FNL)

This Burundian group was originally founded in 1985 as a Hutu rebel group called Palipehutu then later in 2006 became FNL. Many FNL members integrated into the national Burundian army in 2010 but many stayed behind and continued rebel activities and to fight the Burundian armed forces (MONUSCO: United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo, s.a.). The group has recently been trying to build up their strength by joining other groups and forcibly recruit children so they can carry out attacks in Burundi (IRIN, 2013).

Lord´s Resistance Army (LRA)

This group was founded in 1987 in Uganda by Joseph Kony. The group crossed the boarders into DRC in 2005. LRA has killed and abducted thousands of civilians in DRC and is particularly notorious for recruitment of children. The group is also known for mutilating their enemies by cutting of their lips and their ears (IRIN, 2010). The LRA is currently operating in three countries; DRC, Central African Republic and South Sudan. Lately the group has been in survival mode but they continue to attack and abduct civilians. UN documented thirteen children recruited and forty-two abductions in 2014, mainly from DRC. LRA activity is decreasing (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

The Patriotic Resistance Front in Ituri (FRPI):

This group is active in the north-eastern corner of DRC. The group is known for its battles with government forces and peacekeepers from the UN, child recruitment, mass murders and rape (IRIN, 2010) In 2014 the UN documented sixteen children recruited by FRPI and twenty-two cases of rape or other form of sexual violence against children (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015)

Mayi-Mayi groups

These groups are self-defence militias who are most often formed by local leaders. Many of the groups are known by their leader's name (IRIN, 2010). In 2014 the UN documented sixty-one children recruited by various Mayi-Mayi groups. The main Mayi-Mayi groups that are known for recruiting children are: Mayi Mayi Alliance des patriotes pour un Congo libre et souverain (APCLS), Mayi Mayi Lafontaine, Mayi Mayi Simba, Mayi Mayi Kata Katangaa. Mayi-Mayi Simba was documented by the UN for cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence against fifty children and abduction of eighteen children. In 2014 the UN documented thirty-two children recruited by Mayi-Mayi Nyatura and twenty-four cases of rape or other form of sexual violence against children (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015)

ARMED GROUPS IN NORTH AND SOUTH KIVU

OCTOBER 2015
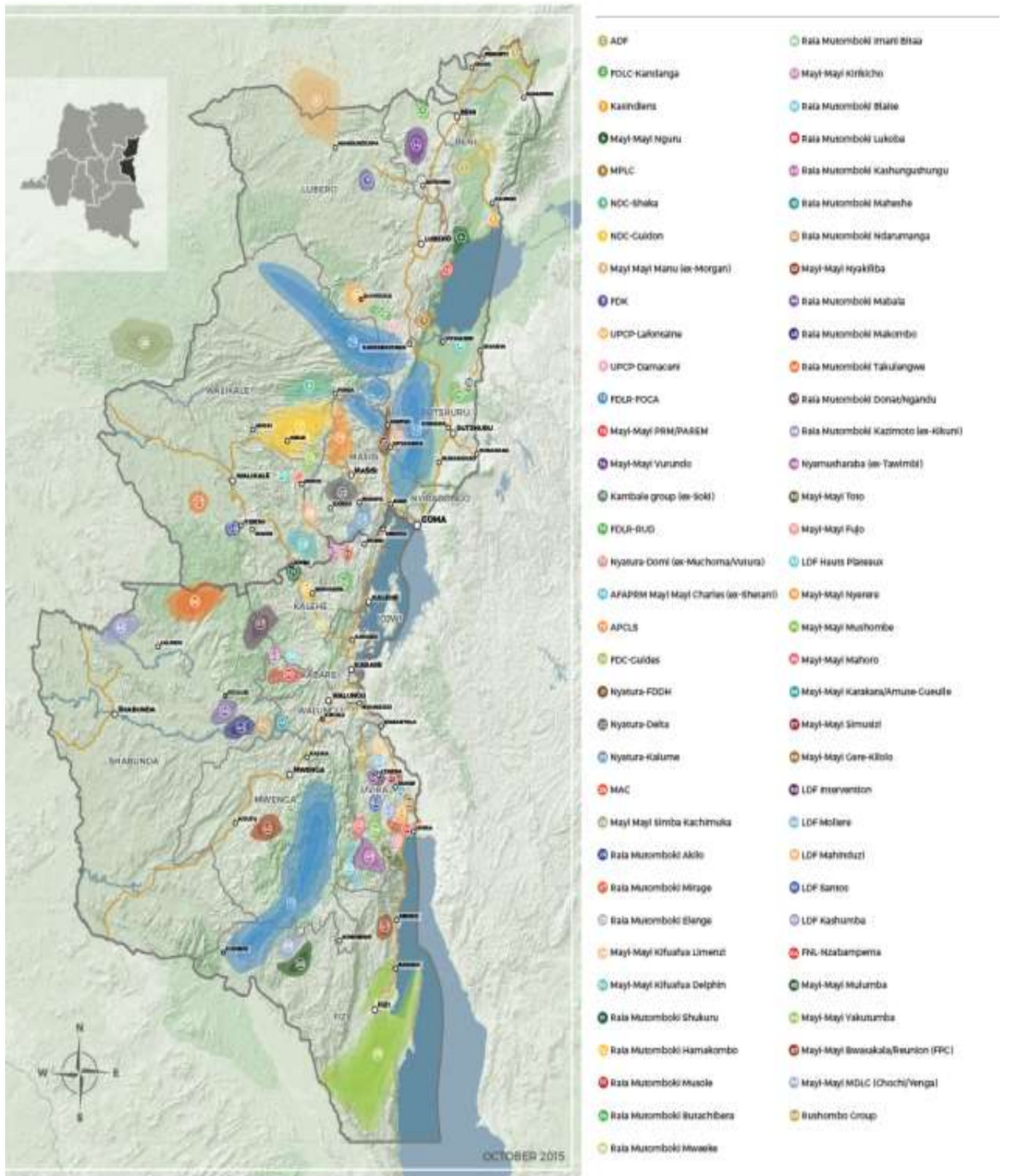
An essay explaining key trends in armed mobilization and our methodology can be found at www.congoresearchgroup.org and www.christophvogel.net

Figure 2 Armed groups in eastern DRC (Stearns and Vogel, 2015).

5.2. South Sudan

5.2.1. Geography

South Sudan is located in north-eastern Africa. It shares its boarders with six countries: Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda, Central African Republic and DRC (see figure 3). The population is estimated to be around eight million with more than sixty ethnic tribes. There is constant conflict between these tribes over land, pasture and other resources. In addition there are constant disputes over boarders and other internal conflicts between government and rebel groups. This instability causes the country to remain underdeveloped. The country is divided in 10 major regions (see figure 3). The regions in the north-east, The Upper Nile, Unity, Jonglei are the most insecure areas due to constant fighting and the high amount of various active rebel groups. (Machakanja, 2014). Almost all South Sudanese are Christians or followers of traditional religions (Copnall, 2014).

Figure 3 Map of South Sudan (Geographic Guide African Countries, 2016).

5.2.2. History

Before Sudan gained its independence in January, 1956 it was under British and Egyptian colonial rule. The north of Sudan benefited greatly from colonial attention and resources but the south remained underdeveloped. The colonial rule kept these two parts separated by restricting travel between north and the south. They perceived Sudan as Arabs and Muslims in the north while the southern population followed Christianity and other traditional religions. Before independence, governance in Sudan was very weak. The country was difficult to govern because of the massive amount of different ethnic and language groups within its borders, in addition to its extensiveness and difficult geography. Areas far from the centre were difficult to control and develop. After the country gained its independence the elected governments were overthrown by military leaders three times. The tension between the north and the south increased after the country gained its independence causing two civil wars between the north and the south. The first civil war was from 1955 to 1972 and the second war from 1983 to January, 2005 when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed (Copnall, 2014). Following the CPA, a DDR/R programme was outlined by The Sudan People´s Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the government for the process of peacebuilding and the National DDR Coordination Council (NDDRCC) was established. NDDRCC was established to review and co-ordinate the work of the two DDR Commissions established for the north and the south, The Northern Sudan DDR Commission (NDDRC) in the north and The Southern Sudan DDR Commission (SDDRC) in the south. The two commissions were responsible for designing and carrying out the DDR/R process in their area. Due to concerns about the uncertainty of the estimated numbers of demobilized combatants because of large numbers of armed groups and shifting factions in the country, the CPA instructed the groups to align themselves with the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) or the SPLA. Tens of thousands of armed group members aligned with SAF and SPLA causing a great need of a DDR/R programme. The first demobilisation took place in 2006 when 142 CAAFG were separated from SPLA but the larger DDR/R programme was not launched until 2009. In 2011, Southern Sudan had demobilized 12,525 combatants (Joshi & Quinn, 2012). The CPA granted the southern population a referendum about remaining part of Sudan. The elections were held in January, 2011 and resulted an almost unanimous vote to secede. South Sudan gained its independence from Sudan in 2011 after decades of conflict between the north and the south causing the deaths of two and a half million people (Copnall, 2014). Since CPA DDR/R programme was still in progress, the interim National Constitution reinstituted SSDDRC as the Republic of South Sudan DDR Commission (Joshi and Quinn, 2012). The CPA and the

separation did not bring on peace like was hoped. By the time of the separation a civil war broke out in Sudan and rebellions and heavy fighting between ethnic groups continued to erupt in South Sudan. The tension between the two countries escalated quickly causing a direct military action at the borders (Copnall, 2014). This ongoing conflict has resulted in an excessive recruitment and use of children in South Sudan. The country signed an action plan in 2012, committing to ensure that their military forces would not use children in their conflict (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014(b)). On December 15th 2013, a heavy fighting broke out in Juba due to political issues. Ethnic dimensions quickly evolved causing the conflict to intensify (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

5.2.3. Economy

The tension between South Sudan and Sudan has much to do with the economic consequences of the separation in 2011. For example the government of Sudan now demands South Sudan to pay excessively high amount of money for their oil´s passage through Sudan´s oil facilities. Another economical issue causing tension is the security situation along the border between the two countries. Before the separation, Sudan´s foreign debt was around thirty-six billion dollars which the government of Sudan suggested that the two countries should split in half. This suggestion outraged the South Sudan´s government and they denied paying a debt that was used to invest in the war against the south (Jok, 2016).

South Sudan has rich deposits of natural resources and therefore has the potential to build a strong private sector but today the South Sudan´s economy relies mainly on oil production and subsistence agriculture. The country growth rate increased rapidly in 2014 but due to ongoing conflict and falling international oil prices they still face negative development prospects in 2015. About fifty percent of the population lives below the poverty line, youth unemployment is very high and infrastructure is poor. Climate change and energy poverty also threaten the livelihood of a large part of the population. Large numbers of people rely heavily on food and health aid from non-governmental and international organizations. (Nkamlel & Mugisha, 2015). DRC is currently ranked in 169th place on the Human Development Index (United Nations Development Programme, 2016).

5.2.4. Overview of Key Armed Groups in South Sudan

According to Wheeler (2015), since the recent conflict started in South Sudan, thousands of children have been recruited, both by government forces and other armed groups. Child recruitment and heavy fighting are widespread across the country by numerous different forces and groups. Here below is an overview of some of South Sudan´s key armed groups and forces that are currently active in the country.

The Sudan People´s Liberation Army (SPLA)

The Sudan People´s Liberation Army (SPLA) started its militarization in 1983 with the goal to overthrow the northern-dominated Islamic government and create a democratic, secular state. In August 1991 the SPLA split into two groups, representing different political goals and ideologies. This caused a violent conflict between the southern military leaders and warlords in addition to a brutal massacre of civilians in the south (Hutchinson, 2001). After the secession of South Sudan and Sudan, the northern Sudanese forces that were part of the SPLA turned into the national army of South Sudan. The SPLA leaders from the north decided to change the name of their movement to SPLM-North and continued to fight the leaders of Sudan to improve the democracy in the country as well as religious and racial tolerance. They maintained their base in South Sudan causing conflict between the two countries. In 2009 the SPLA signed an action plan to end recruitment of children followed by a military order to screen and register all children associated with the SPLA. The use of schools and recruitment of children under the age of eighteen was banned by the group. All these efforts came to a halt due to recent conflict (Jok, 2016). The forces have been listed for recruitment of children into their groups since 2005 (United Nations Secretary-General, 2014) and in 2014 alone the army is reliable for recruiting over three hundred children to its ranks (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

Many county commissioners within the SPLA have used children as bodyguards, servants and to perform domestic tasks. County commissioners are former commanders who still perform military functions during conflicts. The commissioners often take the children with them to battle where the children are expected to protect them (Wheeler, 2015).

Shilluk Militia under the control of Johnson Olony

Olony was at first a commander in the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army but agreed to an amnesty deal with authorities in 2013 and was integrated to SPLA. He defected in April

2015 and began fighting against the government. The group often forcibly recruits both adults and children (Wheeler, 2015).

Sudan People´s Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO)

SPLE-IO is the opposition force against the government of South Sudan. The group is led by Riek Machar. When the war broke out in 2013 the group conducted mass forced recruitment of children where the children were abducted and thrown into battles (Wheeler, 2015). In 2014, the group recruited and used over hundred children (United Nations Secretary-General, 5 June 2015).

White Army groups

These locally organized armed groups or community defence forces are mostly made up of people from the Lou Nuer and the Jikany ethnic groups who want to protect their communities. The majority of the group comprises of young men and boys who are allied with the opposition but are not formally part of it. Large numbers of children have been seen with these groups (Wheeler, 2015).

The South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army-Cobra Faction (SSDM/A-CF)

The group is commanded by David Yau Yau who gained a large support in his rebellion against the government due to their abusive and violent disarmament campaign in 2012. Thousands have joined the group including children due to their mistrust in the government. The group signed a peace agreement with the government in 2014 which included amnesty for abuses committed by the group as well as the government forces. (Wheeler, 2015). It was estimated that about 3000 children were associated with the group prior to the peace deal (UNICEF, 2015(c)).

Part II: Findings and Discussion

Chapter Six: After the Launch of the Children, Not Soldiers Campaign

6.0. Overview

The central research question for this study is "How do efforts by the Children, Not Soldiers campaign to prevent recruitment of children affect the process of release and reintegration of CAAFG in South Sudan and DRC?" This chapter provides information on the Children, Not Soldiers campaign and will address the development of DRC and South Sudan and their efforts to end recruitment and use of children by armed forces and groups since the launch of the campaign. The chapter concludes with a discussion and comparison of the countries' process in committing to ending and preventing recruitment of children.

6.1. The Children, Not Soldiers Campaign

As mentioned before the Children, Not Soldiers campaign was launched in March 2014. The campaigns´ goal is to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by government security forces by the end of 2016. The campaign has generated a wide support from the UN, member states and civil society partners (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). Eight countries were listed in the annex of the United Nations Secretary-General´s report for using children in armed conflicts. The listed countries are Chad, Afghanistan, Myanmar, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014). According to UNICEF specialist interviewed for this study, instead of denying or resisting the fact that children are recruited by their government forces the welcoming of the campaign by the listed states was very positive and it showed how this social norm of child recruitment has changed dramatically in the last two decades. These eight countries no longer tolerate or accept children in their ranks because they want to be taken seriously and to have a professional army.[1]

During the campaign the special representative continues to reach out to member states, the international community, regional organizations and other relevant partners in

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[1] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist about the "Children, Not Soldiers" Campaign and DDR/R in South Sudan and DRC. Interviewed by Erna Rósa Eyþórsdóttir, May 5th, 2016

order to mobilize political, technical and financial support so that the countries can carry out their action plan and protect children from being re-recruited by other groups or if new crises strike. The campaign also focuses on the criminalization and prosecution of those who recruit and use children and also on adequate and properly resourced DDR/R programmes (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

According to UNICEF specialist, advocacy is an important aspect of the campaign but the campaign is also programmatic. That is to say, the success of the campaign is to achieve programmatic results by achieving compliance with the listed countries. The action plans include key actions that need to be taken to reach a systematic reform to end and prevent recruitment of children. These action plans are designed and implemented to achieve compliance and are therefore where the success of the campaign is measured.[2] Those key actions mentioned by the UNICEF specialist are according to UNICEF child protection specialist interviewed for this study; the commitment of parties, signing of the action plan, new regulations and the provision of new laws, setting up an effective civil registration system, capacity strengthening of the government, security sector reforms to make sure that children are not being recruited or being used by armed groups or forces and training provided by the programme to make sure that an effective age registration process is being maintained and for communities to be able to monitor, report and respond to child recruitment.[3] Two of the countries concerned by the campaign were DRC and South Sudan. The governments of both countries signed or recommitted to the action plans to end and prevent the recruitment of children by government forces in the first year of the campaign. The governments of both countries enacted laws to criminalize underage recruitment to armed groups and security forces, enforced the release of children from their military forced and commenced awareness campaigns. In addition, both countries implemented age-assessment mechanisms (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

In order to ensure that all children separated from armed groups and forces are protected from re-recruitment, detention and stigmatization, the campaign encourages the member states to develop procedures where child protection actors take over demobilized children for further process (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015(a)). As part of the campaign, UNICEF and its partners carry out a support to the Release and Reintegration of CAAFG, not only when children are separated

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[2] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016
[3] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist about the "Children, Not Soldiers" Campaign and DDR/R in South Sudan and DRC. Interviewed by Erna Rósa Eyþórsdóttir, May 9th, 2016

from armed forces but also when they are separated from armed groups. Even though the main objective of the Children, Not Soldiers is to end and prevent all recruitment and use of children by government armed forces the campaign´s objective also involves non-state actors (UNICEF Connect, 2015). The growing role of non-state armed groups in current conflicts has called for increased interaction of the UN with armed groups. In order to end and prevent recruitment of children by non-state armed groups the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict has taken part in direct engagement and dialogue with armed groups where the groups are encouraged to sign a written commitments and implementation of action plans. As of 2014, thirteen groups had signed action plans with the UN and many other commitments are under way. Unfortunately, the UN faces many challenges in their engagement with armed groups for example because the UN has limited access to the groups, the group leaders do not have the incentive or the political will to discuss with the UN or there is no specific leader of the group   (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014(a)).

6.2. DRC

The national conflict of DRC has killed thousands of civilians including hundreds of children. Thousands of children have fought in the conflict and tens of thousands remain at risk of being recruited by armed forces and groups. In August, 2015 the president Salva Kiir and the opposition with former Vice President Rick Machar as their leader, signed a peace agreement to end the fighting and release CAAFG (Wheeler, 2015). According to UNICEF specialist the government of DRC signed an action plan that covered two violations: recruitment of children and sexual violence. The compliance and process to end these two violations has not been simultaneous since the compliance to end sexual violence has been as prominent as the compliance to end recruitment of children.[4] There has however been some process in ending sexual violence. The government conducted many activities to raise awareness against child recruitment and in July 2014 President Kabila appointed a Personal Adviser on sexual violence and child recruitment (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

6.2.1. Recruitment and use of children by military forces

Before the launch of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign the armed forces of DRC signed action plans with the UN where they committed to ending use and recruitment of children by

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[4] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016

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their forces (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014(a)).

The government of DRC has made steady process in the implementation of the action plan regarding recruitment of children by security forces. The government has given the UN access to their military facilities and permission for a universal screening of all recruits. FARDC had for example recruited one seventeen year old boy and used him for combat but he was separated from the group during a screening at the training camp conducted by the UN (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2014(b)). According to Child Soldiers International (2014) recruitment procedures have not been able to prevent recruitment of children into the FARDC due to the inability to proof their age due to lack of birth registrations in DRC. Physical examinations have been used to determine the children´s age but these examinations are far from reliable. Commanders also continue to ignore instructions and keep recruiting children and in some cases commanders have hid the children during screening process. Other commanders are simply not aware of these new instructions.

A FARDC General was indicted by the High Military Court in Kinshasa with crimes against humanity, war crimes and recruitment of children (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). In September 2015 the Ministry of Defence endorsed a workshop of joint technical working groups with representatives from the UN and the DRC Government to identify the priority areas to expedite full implementation of the action plan (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015(b)). Due to these efforts there was a significant reduction of recruitment and use of children in security forces despite ongoing conflicts in 2015 (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015(a)).

Detention of CAAFG still remains a grave problem in DRC. In 2014, CAAFG continued to be arrested and detained despite two Government directives. FARDC is responsible for detaining numbers of children at their detention centres for associating with armed groups. The UN managed to secure the release of 121 children from FARDCs´ detention centres. Almost half of the group reported being treated badly during their detention (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

6.2.2. Recruitment and use of children by armed groups

In 2014 the situation in DRC remained fragile. A series of military operations against armed groups were launched causing major political and security developments. 241 new cases of

child recruitment by various armed groups were documented during the year. Seventy-five percent of the cases occurred in North Kivu. Fifty-seven of the children were used as combatants and eight girls were victims of sexual violence. The UN documented the acts of DRC´s active groups and in 2014 alone UN documented 241 new cases of recruitment eighty children killed and ninety-two maimed, forty children killed and maimed by explosive remnants of war, 334 cases of rape and other forms of sexual violence (332 girls and two boys), twenty-two schools attacked (twelve used for military purposes), nineteen hospitals attacked, 108 children abducted (fifty-five percent were below the age of fifteen) and seven incidents of denial of humanitarian access (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). Despite the fact that the government has issued a zero-tolerance policy against child recruitment, armed groups in DRC continued to recruit children in large numbers in 2015. 2045 children were separated from armed groups in DRC the same year. (UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2016)

A significant progress was made in the fight against impunity in the country. This process can been demonstrated by the many arrest warrants issued in DRC against armed group members for recruitment of children (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015(b)). By the end of 2014 four armed group leaders were awaiting trial on charges of child recruitment (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015) and in December, 2015 Cobra Matata, the leader of FRPI was charged for war crimes, child recruitment and crimes against humanity (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 2015(b)).

6.3. South Sudan

A national launch of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign was held in October 2014 followed by the establishment of a joint high-level committee focusing on children affected by armed conflict. A few months before the launch of the campaign the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict visited South Sudan to engage with authorities. During the visit the President of South Sudan, Salva Kiir showed a strong will to criminalize the recruitment and use of children in armed forces and groups and to stop the military use of schools. The Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs signed a recommitment to end the recruitment and use of children and to stop sexual violence, killing and maiming of children and attacks on hospitals and schools.

Despite these efforts, ninety children were verified killed and 220 were injured in 2014. Reports have identified mass graves with children and incidents where children were

summarily executed. Security forces detained boys from the age of fourteen to seventeen and subjected them to inhumane and degrading treatment. UN reported thirty-six children had experienced rape and other forms of sexual violence. Abductions continue in large numbers. Only in the year of 2014, 617 children were recruited by armed groups and forces especially by SPLA, SPLE-IO, the South Sudan National Police Service and other groups and a large amount of children have also been seen with Johnson Olonyi (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

In August 2015, President Salva Kiir and former Vice President Riek Machar, head of the opposition, made a peace agreement where they promised to cease all hostilities and abuses and form a transitional government. In addition, they made a commitment to solve the issue of impunity. Despite this agreement, fighting has increased and spread throughout the country. Violence and abuses by armed forces and groups continue to be carried out with impunity (Human Rights Watch, 2016). The government of South Sudan has not put much emphasis on ending impunity. David Yau Yau, the leader of the Cobra Faction did not have to face any charges for child recruitment when the signed a peace agreement with the government in 2014. Instead, he was employed by the government and was made a general. Another group leader, Matthew Puljang was also given a significant power in his area despite widespread recruitment of children (Wheeler, 2015)

6.3.1. Recruitment and use of children by military forces

UNICEF has been working for years with the SPLA to end recruitment and use of children by their armed forces but recent conflict has capsized the reforms that where made before (UNICEF Press centre, 2014). At the end of 2014 the government of South Sudan had also not made any progress in implementing their commitments to the action plan or the recommitment agreement that was signed in June 2014 (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). Between 2014 and 2015 many children were forced to join South Sudan´s government forces. If they resisted they were abused or detained. Many children have also joined looking for better conditions or promised money and food. The SPLA has in particular managed to recruit street children by offering them food. In many cases the SPLA used children on the front lines in order to protect towns and villages. Many children were also recruited by Johnson Olony when his group was fighting with the SPLA (Wheeler, 2015).

According to UNICEF child protection specialist during current conflict situation in South Sudan, there have been informal releases of CAAFG that have not been filed up to an actual plan with the Children, Not Soldiers Campaign. Children are also being released

without a peace agreement in ongoing conflict situations, both by armed groups and forces in South Sudan.[5]

6.3.2. Recruitment and use of children by armed groups

In May 2014, a peace deal was made between the Government of South Sudan and the Cobra Faction. The peace deal includes the group being integrated into the government´s military forces, the SPLA. One condition was that the group would release all children below the age of eighteen. Following the peace deal the Cobra Faction started releasing children, many of whom had been with the group for two to four years and were recruited at the age of ten (UNICEF connect, 2015). From January 2015, 1757 children have been released from the group. The group has participated in a series of release ceremonies where few hundred children are released from the group. In April 2015 the final release ceremony was a success when the last group of children were separated from the group (UNICEF Press Centre, 2015(b)).

The leader of SPLA-OI signed a commitment as well agreeing to end violations against children. Despite that commitment the group had not made any process in implementing their commitments in the end of 2014 (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). A UNICEF specialist states that the negotiations between SPLA/IO and the government have been a tremendous challenge due to the active conflict in the country, causing many setbacks in sustainable peacebuilding. Both groups, the SPLA and the opposition SPLA/IO actively keep on recruiting children. Despite these challenges, the UN is truly committed to solve the issue which will ultimately contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and prevent recruitment of children.[6] In February 2015, hundreds of children preparing for exams were abducted and forcibly recruited to armed groups. This happened in northern South Sudan. The group that took them was the Shilluk Militia group that was aligned with the SPLA forces but was from now on outside the army´s control (UNICEF Press Centre, 2015(a)). The number of children associated with armed groups and forces has also increased in the country since the peace agreement between the government and the opposition. Now in 2016, UNICEF estimates that about sixteen thousand children have been recruited, both by government forces and armed groups (UNICEF Press Centre, 2016).

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[5] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016
[6] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016

6.4. Discussion and Comparison

Both countries have signed an action plan with the UN promising to commit on ending recruitment and use of children by their military forces. Despite the fact that both the governments of DRC and South Sudan were eager to welcome the campaign and to commit to end and prevent the child recruitment, the difference between the processes of the campaign in the two countries has been enormous according to a statement by a UNICEF specialist. The main reason is the setback of the campaign in South Sudan due to the civil war. The opportunities for the campaign´s success are very limited. The conflict in DRC is different from the conflict in South Sudan because the country is not in the middle of a civil war. Instead there is a on and off conflict in DRC causing many challenges but the country is on a progressive path.[7] This has affected the government´s commitments to the action plan. DRC has committed to the action plan and made strong efforts in ending and preventing recruitment by armed forces. Incidences where children are recruited by their military forces have decreased rapidly. Unlike DRC, the government of South Sudan has not committed to the action plan and their military forces keep recruiting children. The UNICEF child protection specialist states that in terms of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign´s process in South Sudan and DRC, there is not much difference besides the South Sudan´s informal releases and that some children are being released without a peace agreement in ongoing conflict situations.[8] Both governments have signed peace agreements with the opposition where the release of CAAFG is included as an obligation causing large numbers of children to be separated from the groups but numbers of children are still being recruited by armed forces in both countries. It seems like the reason for ongoing recruitment is the slow process of peace reforms and DDR/R programmes in both countries in addition to the ongoing impunity in South Sudan.

Chapter Seven: Current DDR/R Programmes

7.0. Overview

This chapter seeks to answer the sub-research questions: (1) Are the DDR/R programmes in DRC and South Sudan contributing to sustainable peacebuilding and preventing recruitment of children to armed forces and groups? (2) How do the DDR/R programmes in DRC and

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[7] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016
[8] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016

South Sudan address the case of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups? (3) Do the Release and Reintegration programmes for CAAFG in South Sudan and DRC protect the children from being blamed and stigmatized for the acts they committed while associated with armed groups? (4) What are the differences and similarities between the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC and South Sudan?

In this chapter there will be an overview of current DDR/R programmes in South Sudan and DRC and an evaluation of their capacity to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding and to prevent recruitment of children.

7.1. Current DDR/R Programmes in DRC

The DDR/R programmes in the DRC still leave a lot to be desired. CONADER, The Demobilization and Reintegration Commission was a governmental body that coordinated the DDR/R programmes in DRC. It was established in 2003 and its task was to implement and coordinate rehabilitation and reintegration of both former adult fighters and CAAFG (Nduwimana, 2013). Unfortunately, CONADER was known for corruption, lack of direction and lack of responsibility. The commission was disorganized and had poor knowledge of the security conditions in the country, causing them to overlook numerous factors that were obstructing the progress of the DDR/R programmes (Vogel & Musamba, 2016). During the development of a new DDR/R programme, the commission was replaced in 2014 by UEPN-DDR. The multiple stakeholders of UEPN-DDR include the government of DRC, MONUSCO, UN aid agencies, representatives from private and public sectors and international and local NGO´s (Bafilemba, Hall & Muller, 2014).

DRC´s new DDR/R programme, DDR III was then adopted in 2014. Due to issues concerning funding, the programme was not implemented until 2015 when it received funding from the World Bank and other donors. Unfortunately, funding was scarce and a year after the launch of DDR III the programme was still struggling to function properly. These new programmes caused a great deal of tension among militias in DRC. The programme aimed to transfer ex-combatants to other parts of DRC causing many combatants not to participate in the programme because they were not willing to move away from their homes and families.

The condition in the DDR/R centres also caused a concern. Some centres were still being built while ex-combatants waited for assistance while others centres struggled to provide ex-combatants with food and healthcare (Vogel & Musamba, 2016). One remote centre in northern DRC was closed after 100 people, ex-combatants, men, women and children died from diseases and starvation. The surrendered combatants and their family

members were transferred from eastern DRC all the way to a centre in remote part of Equateur province to await participation in the DDR/R programme. The programme had yet to be implemented and the poor infrastructure in the area hindered the provision of supplies, food and medicine (Human Rights Watch, 2014).

7.1.1. Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC

No effective national strategy has been developed for Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC. The country´s government has not been eager to participate in the implementation of a special Release and Reintegration programmes for children. Instead they have largely put it in the hands of the UN and international and local NGO´s. Current structure of Release and Reintegration programmes for children in DRC contains three key bodies; MONUSCO is in charge of identifying and releasing CAAFG from armed forces and groups and UNICEF then coordinates demobilization and reintegration through a small number of NGO´s who carry out the process. UEPN-DDR is then in charge of overviewing the process and documentation (Child Soldiers International, 2014).

In 2014 at least 1,030 children were separated from armed groups. Most of these children were recruited in 2012-2013. Thirty-one percent of those children were under the age of fifteen when they were recruited. The children were separated from various groups, for example FDLR, Nyatura, Rayia Mutomboki, FRPI and many other smaller groups. Following a military operation later in the year, sixty malnourished and wounded children were rescued from ADF by FARDC with support from MONUSCO. Forty percent of those children were used as combatants. This operation provided the children, who were abandoned during the military operation, with medical evacuation, assistance and reintegration support (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015).

In 2015, UNICEF started working on implementing a national plan for the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration of former CAAFG. UNICEF is working on this implementation in cooperation with many partners. One of these partners is **PAMI** (Programme in Support of the Fight against Poverty). This local NGO is working with sixty host families. One-third of these families are specialized in caring for former CAAFG. While child protection workers work on looking for family members and arrange reunification and reintegration these families host the children until they are ready to be reunited with their families. During their stay with their host family they spend their days at the day centre where they participate in activities with other children in the community (Wirth, 2015). Another partner of UNICEF is **AJEDEC**, a local NGO. Similar to PAMI, this organization takes care

of former CAAFG until they can be reintegrated (UNICEF, 2015(a)). **UPDECO**, the Union for Peace and Promotion of Children´s Rights is a local NGO who work on Release and Reintegration for CAAFG. In 2015, UPDECO assisted 226 children through the programme and 131 of them were reunited with their families. Since 2011 the organization has reintegrated 1352 children (Seck, 2015).

ICRC, International Committee of the Red Cross is another partner of UNICEF who works on family tracing for former CAAFG. The staff often travels vast distances to remote parts of DRC for family tracing. They do not only travel by car or motorcycle but sometimes they are forced to travel by bicycle or even by foot. ICRC then does a follow up three months after reintegration. In 2014, ICRC reunited over 800 former CAAFG with their families. While child-protection agents work on family tracing, the children are being housed in centres run by **APEDE**, a national NGO whose major role is to house the children until reintegration and to arrange psychosocial and educational activities. ICRC also works on preventing blame and stigmatization by the children´s communities and families by organized meetings and training sessions in the villages. (International Committee of the Red Cross, 2015)

As can be seen, there are many active players involved with release and reintegration of CAAGG. Nevertheless, many CAAFG were in great need of help in 2014 but because of lack of funding there was a major decrease in UNICEFs´ assistance in 2013 (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). According to UNICEF (2015(d)), 5108 CAAFG were released from armed forces and groups in 2015. Four thousands of those children had been associated with armed groups in North Kivu. The number of released CAAFG in 2015 was substantially higher than in 2014 which was 3831. Like mentioned before, the DDR III was not implemented until 2015 which explains the increase in demobilized CAAFG in 2015.

Although the number of released children is increasing, there are still many issues concerning assistance for numbers of children. The Release and Reintegration programmes for children had some difficulties with family tracing in 2015. This was caused by continued movements of civilians due to ongoing conflict. For that reason many children had to stay longer with their host families or at their centres than usual (UNICEF, 2015(d)). According to Child Soldiers International (2014), re-recruitment of CAAFG is still a frequent problem, mainly because of ongoing conflict and new group mobilisations but also because of lack of ability to improve the DDR/R programmes. The reason is that the programmes are extremely underfunded and there are too few to accommodate demand. Another issue was that the defeat of M23 and the surrender of other armed groups caused an enormous demobilization of CAAFG in great need of assistance that was lacking. Another reason for recruitment of

children is that awareness in communities is lacking due to the fact that parents, teachers and community leaders continue to encourage children to volunteer.

Furthermore, the issue of high numbers of self-demobilized CAAFG is still present in DRC due to the lack of Release and Reintegration programmes for children and because in some areas these programmes are non-existent. Due to the lack of programmes that pay attention to this issue many self-demobilized children struggle to reintegrate back to their communities and are therefore vulnerable for re-recruitment (Kiyala 2015).

7.2. Current DDR/R Programmes in South Sudan

As a part of the CPA, signed in 2005 to end the conflict in Sudan, a DDR/R Programme was launched in the country in 2009. The programme ended in 2012 after the programme had provided assistance to over ten thousand ex-combatants. At the end of the programme another DDR/R programme had been designed for 2013 (Machar, 2012). The 2013 programme was launched at Mapel, in September during a reintegration of 290 ex-combatants. The ex-combatants received a three month vocational training and education in addition to receiving wages for a year after reintegration. The programme was conducted as a pilot programme where the NDDRC and partner organizations evaluated the process as an effort to improve the DDR/R programmes in South Sudan (ReliefWeb, 2013). Due to continuous heavy fighting the efforts for a new DDR/R programme were postponed. In the aftermath of the 2015 peace agreement between the government and the opposition there were hopes that the agreement would lead to formation of a unified army and a new DDR/R programme would be launched. This DDR/R programme would assist with the reduction of the army, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants by offering them other career options. In addition, the programme would focus on the reintegration of CAAFG. In 2016 a national DDR/R programme had still not been implemented but an international conference on DDR/R was held in April to mobilize financial and human resources and to set a timeline for the new programme (Deng, 2016). Like mentioned before, the government of South Sudan has made a peace deal with the Cobra Faction which included amnesty for abuses committed by the group as well as the government forces and that the combatants of the Cobra Faction would be integrated into the SPLA. In mid-2015, the group was still waiting to be integrated into the national army (Wheeler, 2015) most likely due to the delay in implementing a new DDR/R programme.

7.2.1. Release and Reintegration programmes for children in South Sudan

According to UNICEF child protection specialist there are numbers of different players involved with the Release and Reintegration programmes in South Sudan. The key players are UNICEF and the Government´s National Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Commission (NDDRC) who is in charge of the disarmament part of the programme and to make sure that the released children are processed and registered by UNICEF. Other key organizations are the Ministry of Defence and local and international NGO´s.[9] UNICEF in South Sudan in association with other partners provide a range of services for released children. When children are separated from armed groups they are handed over to the NDDRC and UNICEF where they are identified and registered.

After registration, the children stay in compounds with interim care centres where they are provided with medical care, psychosocial support and recreational activities until they are reunited with their families. The World Food Programme (WFP) provides the children with food while they stay at the centre. Usually this process takes about eighteen months to two years. Before the children are reintegrated the programme reaches out to the children´s communities to prevent blame and stigmatization (UNICEF Connect, 2015). According to the UNICEF child protection specialist there are high numbers of cases in South Sudan where girls are having children as a result of sexual armed violence and there has been an issue in terms of bringing these girls back to their communities due to blame and stigmatization. It is important to the programmes that these girls receive the necessary reintegration support to prevent stigmatization.[10]

All the children that were released from the Cobra Faction received support from UNICEF and partners through their programme. About seventy-one percent of the group received follow up visits after reintegration and it is estimated that more will be visited when a dry season in Lekuongole clears the access throughout the area (UNICEF, 2015(b)).

Reintegration programmes in South Sudan have faced many issues concerning family tracing and reunification due to limited access for child protection actors in South Sudan. In the attempt to provide basic, life-saving assistance for children few rapid response missions were conducted (United Nations Secretary-General, 2015). Another issue is that release processes have taken so long that CAAFG that were due to be released got tired of waiting and returned to their groups. Some release processes have not been finalized before the outbreak of another conflict causing the children to continue to fight with their groups. Group

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[9] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016
[10] Same source

leaders of the Cobra Faction also kept CAAFG hostage until the signing of the peace deal in 2014. Some children waited for more than a year to be released (Wheeler, 2015).

During a discussion with a UNICEF specialist the researcher was informed that the Release and Reintegration programmes for children are highly capable to assist the numbers of demobilized children in both DRC and South Sudan because when more children are released from armed groups or forces, UNICEF will increase their partner capacity and coverage.[11] One then gets a sense that all CAAFG receive assistance when demobilized. However, there have been challenges that hinder the capability of the programmes. Two months ago, UNICEF reported that the humanitarian funding for South Sudan has collapsed, forcing UNICEF and their child protection partners in the country to withdraw their support and services in the most vulnerable areas and in communities that are hardest to reach. The spread of the conflict has been a great issue for child protection organization. The conflict has reached previously peaceful areas where the child protection actors are currently not operating (UNICEF Press Centre, 2016). According to UNICEF child protection specialist, despite of these issues the programme is still active due to small resources that are still available and other resources that were already set aside for the Release and Reintegration programmes.[12]

7.3. Discussion and Comparison

Both South Sudan and DRC are facing major obstacles in their implementation of new DDR/R programmes. The implementation of the programmes has taken a long time due to lack of funding and ongoing conflict. The DRC´s programmes has now been implemented but has already caused tension among militias. South Sudan´s programmes has yet to be implemented causing large numbers of combatants waiting for reintegration. As has been already discussed in this study, making combatants wait for registration to a DDR/R programme has not presented good outcome. Many combatants have returned to fighting due to long wait after demobilization process. It can therefore have negative effect on the process of peacebuilding by not implementing a new DDR/R programme right away.

The governments of DRC and South Sudan work in a close cooperation with UNICEF regarding Release and Reintegration for children. UNICEF is responsible for coordinating the programmes in both countries hence the structure of the Release and Reintegration programmes in the two countries are very similar. The difference lies mainly with the challenges these programmes are facing mainly due to lack of long term funding and ongoing

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[11] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016
[12] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016

conflict. The Release and Reintegration programmes require long term funding and it can become a great issue when lack of resources becomes an obstacle for the programme like what is happening now in South Sudan and what happened in DRC, 2013. Long term funding is an obstacle in almost every Release and Reintegration programme but despite of that, the programme in terms of its design is highly capable to provide all the necessary support for the released children and their communities.[13]

According to UNICEF child protection specialist, there are many various factors of the Release and Reintegration programmes that are a great contribution to sustainable peacebuilding and that prevent recruitment of children. By giving alternatives to children, that where never an option before, for example access to education and social skills training is a contribution by itself and this is an alternative not only for former CAAFG but also for children of communities that are vulnerable and are in danger of being recruited by armed forces or groups. By offering this support to the communities creates a secure environment that contributes to the prevention of child recruitment.[14]

The Release and Reintegration programmes in South Sudan and DRC look at the protection of children from being blamed and stigmatized as a high priority in the prevention of recruitment. The interviewed UNICEF specialist stated that the involvement of the communities is fundamental for the success of the Release and Reintegration programmes. It is necessary for the children to engage with and get support from the communities so they can reintegrate. Stigmatization is a large obstacle for the reintegration process and there are various circumstances that have to be taken into consideration when the reintegration process is implemented, for example the community's traditional or ritual activities. Children might also have committed crimes in their own communities while others committed crimes in other communities and that also has to be taken into consideration when engaging with communities.[15] According to UNICEF child protection specialist, in terms of stigmatization the Release and Reintegration programmes are not only providing support to released CAAFG but they also provide support to children from vulnerable communities by working with the community, their leaders and policy makers to make sure that the communities are able to provide all the necessary support to protect the children. These programmes also address the issues of girl CAAFG differently by providing care for the girl´s children, community mediations to prevent stigmatization so that the girl can be reintegrated back to their families. These programmes also include livelihood support, assistance with small businesses and other basic services.[16]

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[13] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016
[14] Same source
[15] A phone interview with a UNICEF specialist, May 5th, 2016
[16] A phone interview with a UNICEF child protection specialist, May 9th, 2016

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

This study critically examined the process of the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in South Sudan and DRC and their relationship with the Children, Not Soldiers Campaign. Furthermore, this study examined how the DDR/R programmes in South Sudan and DRC have contributed to sustainable peacebuilding and prevented recruitment of children by armed forces and groups. The main data for the study was collected through secondary literature. In addition the researcher used a qualitative approach for more information on the topic, where two unstructured interviews were conducted with a UNICEF specialist and a UNICEF child protection specialist.

Both DRC and South Sudan gained their independence from a colonial power in the mid nineteenth century, starting with a weak government and numbers of different ethnic groups causing a great tension in the countries. South Sudan however, only gained their independence from Sudan in 2011. South Sudan is therefore a young nation with a weak government while DRC´s political system has been developing since independence. This study has shown that funding is a major obstacle for effective DDR/R programmes as well as the Release and Reintegration programmes for children. The economy of both countries have suffered due to ongoing conflict and instability. Nevertheless, DRC is experiencing economic growth that could have positive outcome for the DDR/R programmes and the Release and Reintegration programmes. Unlike DRC, South Sudan´s economy is facing negative development and has therefore the changes of increased funding for the programmes are fairly low. It is therefore likely that the programmes in South Sudan need to rely on funding from international donors. Ongoing conflict has hindered the development of both countries but while there is an on and off conflict going on in DRC, South Sudan is confronted with a civil war. Both countries have been listed by the United Nations as countries who recruit children into their national armies.

The action plans of the Children, Not Soldiers campaign are designed and implemented to end and prevent recruitment of children. Both two countries have signed an action plan with the UN promising to commit to ending recruitment and use of children by their military forces and armed groups. Despite these commitments there are still many challenges and the process of the campaign differs greatly in the two countries. DRC has made strong commitments to end and prevent recruitment of children but the process of ending sexual violence against children is still under way. Opposed to DRC, South Sudan has not committed to the action plan and both the government forces and the opposition continue

to recruit large numbers of children. By achieving compliance with DRC and South Sudan shows that the governments of both countries do not want to have children in their militaries. The civil war in South Sudan has been an enormous obstacle for the campaigns process to end and prevent recruitment of children in the country. Nonetheless, there is a positive process gaining their compliance and the release of all CAAFG from the Cobra Faction shows that the government working on ending use and recruitment of children.

Like was mentioned in Chapter three, the objectives of DDR/R programmes are to pave the way for recovery and development and to deal with the post-conflict security problem when ex-combatants leave their groups and the Integrated DDR Standards state that an effective DDR/R programme relies on four pre-conditions: Signing of peace-agreement, trust in the peace process, willingness of groups and parties to be involved with DDR/R and a minimum guarantee of security. These DDR/R objectives do not really apply to the DDR/R programmes in South Sudan and DRC due to ongoing conflict in both countries. Both countries struggle with the implementation of a DDR/R programme. DRC´s new DDR/R programme is lacking funding and the willingness of combatants to participate due to many concerns regarding the programme. South Sudan is still waiting on a financial support for the implementation of their DDR/R programme but the main obstacle is the ongoing civil war. As has been discussed, many combatants are waiting for reintegration but due to these setbacks they are still waiting. The issues with the DDR/R programmes in both countries show that there is a strong relationship between DDR/R programmes and peacebuilding as predicted by Berdal and Colletta et al. The failure of both countries to implement a strong and well organized DDR/R programme due to financial constraints and ongoing conflict has caused increased insecurity at a societal and individual level and caused combatants to remain with their armed groups. Despite these issues, the DDR/R programme in DRC and the peace agreement in 2015 has affected the substantial increase in the numbers of children separated from armed groups and forces and the peace agreement between the Cobra Faction and the government of South-Sudan also affected the release of large numbers of children.

The Children, Not Soldiers campaign is involved with the Release and Reintegration programmes in South Sudan and DRC because both countries rely heavily on UNICEF and international NGO´s for the release and reintegration of CAAFG. In cooperation with governmental bodies, UNICEF coordinates these programmes through local and international NGO´s. In both countries, the Release and Reintegration programmes are similar to the formal process of the one described by Seymore in chapter three. The process is carried out at any time, not only when DDR/R programmes have been formerly implemented. The

programmes are usually conducted in transit centres where most of the children stay. Other children stay with host families who work with the NGO´s. At the centres they receive medical care, psychosocial support and education before they are reintegrated to their communities. UNICEF and partners in both countries mediate with communities to prevent blame and stigmatization before the children are reintegrated and special programmes are offered for girl CAAFG, especially those who have had children during their association with armed groups or forces.

The Release and Reintegration programmes in both countries are highly capable to assist the numbers of CAAFG that have been separated from armed groups and forces. Even so, the programmes are facing many challenges mostly due to financial constraints. The conflicts are spreading to new areas causing the programme to be constantly on the move to be able to reach as many children as possible. If they are not successful in reaching the children in time it is highly likely that the children have self-demobilized which increases their vulnerability to re-recruitment or that they have returned to their groups. Financial support is imperil for these programmes to be present in the areas where children are part of armed forces or groups so they are able to reach as many children as possible.

More research about this issue is necessary, especially a field-based research in order to get more detailed information from participants who have different knowledge and experience of DDR/R, release and reintegration of children and the Children, Not Soldiers campaign for example ex-combatants, CAAFG, former CAAFG, local NGO´s and international organizations.

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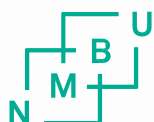
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Appendix 1: Interview guide – UNICEF Specialist and UNICEF child protection specialist

Questions

1. What are the key differences between the process of the Children, not Soldiers campaign in **South Sudan** and **DRC**?

2. What key organizations are involved with the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in **South Sudan** and **DRC**?

3. Do you think that current DDR/R programmes in **South Sudan** are contributing to sustainable peacebuilding and preventing recruitment of children to armed forces and groups? Please explain your answer.

4. Do you think that current DDR/R programmes in **DRC** are contributing to sustainable peacebuilding and preventing recruitment of children to armed forces and groups? Please explain your answer.

5. Do you think that efforts by the Children, Not Soldiers campaign to end and prevent recruitment of children affect the process and capability of Release and Reintegration programmes for children in **South Sudan**? Please explain your answer.

6. Do you think that efforts by the Children, Not Soldiers campaign to end and prevent recruitment of children affect the process and capability of Release and Reintegration programmes for children in **DRC**? Please explain your answer.

7. Do you think that current Release and Reintegration programmes for children are capable enough to assist the numbers of demobilized children in **South Sudan**? Please explain your answer.

8. Do you think that current Release and Reintegration programmes for children are capable enough to assist the numbers of demobilized children in **DRC**? Please explain your answer.

9. Do you think that the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in **South Sudan** are doing enough to protect children from being blamed and stigmatized for acts they committed while associated with armed groups or forces?

10. Do you think that the Release and Reintegration programmes for children in **DRC** are doing enough to protect children from being blamed and stigmatized for acts they committed while associated with armed groups or forces?

11. Is there something you would like to add?