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Issue Paper
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO
SITUATION OF CHILDREN
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Source: United Nations. 29 September 2003. Cartographic Section. "Democratic Republic of the Congo." <http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/drcongo.pdf> [Accessed 22 Oct. 2003]

1. INTRODUCTION

This paper focuses on the situation of children in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It updates and completes the information provided in the Responses to Information Requests RDC40561.FE of 28 February 2003, RDC41062.FE of 14 February 2003, RDC38995.FE of 26 June 2002 and RDC38958.FE of 26 April 2002. For a better understanding of the armed conflict that has persisted in this country for the last five years, please consult the issue paper *Democratic Republic of Congo: The August 1998 Rebellion and Affected Groups*, published in December 1998 by the Research Directorate of the Immigration and Refugee Board (IRB). This paper and the above-mentioned Responses are available at all IRB Regional Documentation Centres and on the IRB Website at <http://www.irb.gc.ca>.

For a better understanding of the issue of child soldiers in the DRC, please consult the report *Democratic Republic of Congo: Children at War*, published on 9 September 2003 by Amnesty International (AI) and available at the following Internet address: <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGAFR620342003?open&of=ENG-COD>.

1.1 Legal Framework

The DRC ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) in September 1990 (Watchlist June 2003, 3; CICR-Belgique 2001; IBCR 20 Mar. 2003, 2). In November 2001, it also ratified the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict (ibid., 3; United Nations 26 Nov. 2002, para. 36; Watchlist June 2003, 3; CICR-Belgique 2001). The Optional Protocol sets the minimum age for military recruitment and participation in combat at 18 (ibid.; United Nations 26 Nov. 2002, para. 3). It prohibits insurgent and rebel groups from recruiting persons under 18 years [UN English version] "under any circumstances" (ibid.).

Since 1999, the DRC has also been a signatory to the International Labour Organization (ILO)

Convention No. 182, concerning the worst forms of child labour (ibid., para. 39; ILO 17 Oct. 2003; ibid. 21 June 2001; IBCR Mar. 2003, 3). This Convention prohibits, among other things, [translation] "child trafficking and serfdom, forced child labour, and the forced recruitment of children for use in armed conflict" (CICR-Belgique 2001).

Laurent-Désiré Kabila, the late president of the DRC, issued a 9 June 2000 decree banning the recruitment of children under the age of 18 into the armed forces (*Info-Congo/Kinshasa* May-June 2000; HRW 5 June 2001; Save the Children 2003, 9; United Nations 16 June 2000). This decree also provided for the creation of a national commission on the demobilization and reintegration of vulnerable populations, in particular, child soldiers (ibid.; *Info-Congo/Kinshasa* May-June 2000). Article 184 of the April 2003 Congolese Constitution of the Transition also prohibits the recruitment of children under age 18, as well as their participation in hostilities (Watchlist June 2003, 26; DRC 4 Apr. 2003). Article 44 of this constitution describes the government's obligation to protect children against prostitution and sexual harassment, among other things, while Article 45 describes the government's obligation to protect children [translation] "against any attack on their health, education or moral development" (ibid.).

2. CHILDREN'S ISSUES

Children under the age of 18 make up approximately 55 per cent of the population in the DRC (Watchlist June 2003, 1; IBCR 20 Mar. 2003, 2). However, only about 50 per cent of children between the ages of 6 and 11 attend school (Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3; World Bank Mar. 2002, 7). The infant mortality rate is estimated at 128 per 1,000 in the DRC (ibid.; Watchlist June 2003, 1). The number of children orphaned by AIDS (that is, children who have lost either one or both parents due to AIDS) was estimated at over 800,000 in 2001 (PANA 1 Mar. 2001; United Nations 28 May 2001), and over 900,000 in 2003 (Watchlist June 2003, 20; Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3).

Furthermore, children in the DRC are recruited and used as soldiers on a large scale (IBCR 20 Mar. 2003, 6; AI 9 Sept. 2003; Watchlist June 2003, 2-3). Tens of thousands of others are reported to live on the streets of the nation's major cities (ibid., 11-12; BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Agence de presse protestante 27 May 2003; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002; AlertNet 29 Aug. 2002). The organization Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict noted that there are many categories of children experiencing difficulties in the DRC: [Watchlist English version] "children in the street (during the day), children of the street (during day and night), children in prison, child laborers, child prostitutes, children accused of sorcery, demobilized or escaped child soldiers, unaccompanied displaced children . . . abandoned children . . . [and] children orphaned by AIDS" (June 2003, 11).

2. 1. Child Soldiers

The Congolese parties involved in the conflict in the DRC during the last five years include, among others, the Congolese government, the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Goma (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Goma, RCD-Goma), the Congolese Rally for Democracy-Liberation Movement (Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie-Mouvement de libération, RCD-ML), the Congolese Liberation Movement (Mouvement de libération du Congo, MLC), the Mayi-Mayi militia (tribal militia in the eastern part of the country), and the Union of Congolese Patriots (Union des patriotes congolais, UPC), an armed faction located in Ituri (AI 9 Sept. 2003; United Nations 26 Nov. 2002, Annex; Watchlist June 2003, 2-3). All of these parties are reported to have recruited and used children as soldiers (ibid.; AI 9 Sept. 2003; HRW July 2003). Within the UPC alone, 50 to 75 per cent of combatants are children (Watchlist June 2003, 15; AFP 11 Feb. 2003). According to the International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR), one in fourteen soldiers of the Congolese Armed Forces (Forces

armées congolaises, FAC), the government armed forces, is a child under the age of 13 (IBCR 20 Mar. 2003, 6). Amnesty International, for its part, estimates that children account for 10 per cent of FAC soldiers (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 3.5). On the whole, children represent approximately 35 per cent of all armed forces combined (ibid., Sec. 4.1; UNICEF 6 June 2003; United Nations 21 Feb. 2003, para. 36).

Girls are not excluded from forced recruitment (Watchlist June 2003, 26; AI 9 Sept. 2003; HRW July 2003). In addition to participating in hostilities, boys and girls are often used to carry munitions and food to adult soldiers (Save the Children 2003, 12; AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.1) or to exploit natural resources (Watchlist June 2003, 23). However, in most cases, girls are used for domestic work and sexual purposes (ibid., 26; AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.1; Save the Children 2003, 12; HRW July 2003).

According to Amnesty International, the efforts of the government and various armed groups to demobilize child soldiers have been nothing more than [AI English version] "public relations exercises" that have turned out to be [AI English version] "a disastrous failure" (9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 3.5.3 et 5). IBCR noted that the June 2000 decree regarding the demobilization of children has obviously not been implemented (20 Mar. 2003, 6). HRW also pointed out that [HRW English version] "no substantial demobilization of children has taken place, despite a June 9, 2000 decree" (5 June 2001).

With regard to the number of children who have been demobilized, Save the Children, for example, has contributed to the demobilization of more than 1,200 child soldiers in the two provinces of North and South Kivu since 1999 (Save the Children 2003, 7). The same organization is deeply concerned, however, that very few girls have been demobilized—to its knowledge, only nine of the thousands of girls that are estimated to be involved with various armed groups (ibid., 12).

Sources indicated very recently that children continue to be recruited as soldiers and used in hostilities, despite the fact that the DRC has signed international agreements to protect children (Watchlist June 2003, 25-26; AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 5;). Furthermore, Amnesty International reported that demobilized child soldiers are at constant risk of being re-recruited, particularly in the eastern part of the country (ibid., Sec. 2.5). According to this organization, [AI English version] "[n]one of the armed groups operating in the east are genuinely committed to demobilisation initiatives" and [AI English version] "[c]hildren are often closely monitored by commanders after their demobilisation and are simply re-recruited when renewed fighting flares up and the armies need to bolster their ranks" (ibid.). According to Save the Children, 147 children who were demobilized between August 1999 and December 2002 and rejoined their families were subsequently re-recruited (2003, 7). The children's rights organization pointed out, however, that 62 per cent of those re-recruited were 18 years of age of older (Save the Children 2003, 7).

2.2. Street children

Various sources estimate that between 8,000 and 20,000 children live on the streets of Kinshasa alone (BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Agence de presse protestante 27 May 2003; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002; AlertNet 29 Aug. 2002). The organization Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, for its part, quoted an unidentified source that estimated their number at 40,000 (June 2003, 12). The average age of these children is approximately 12 years (Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002). The phenomenon of street children is not limited to the city of Kinshasa —there are a great many of them throughout the country (Watchlist June 2003, 11-12; Muhimuzi 15 Oct. 2003; Braeckman 29 Sept. 2003). Quoting statistics from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Élise Kindja Muhimuzi, Permanent Secretary of the National Committee for Women in Development (Comité national Femme et développement, CONAFED), estimates that 9,648 children live on the streets in the province of East Kasai alone (15 Oct. 2003). According to Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, over 10,000

children lived on the streets of the town of Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu, in 2001 (Watchlist June 2003, 11). Pascal Kabungulu Kibembi, Executive Secretary of the organization Héritiers de la justice, believes that there are currently more than 3,000 children on the streets of Bukavu and Uvira, also in South Kivu (24 Oct. 2003). There are an estimated 70,000 unaccompanied children nationwide (ACCORD/HCR 28 Nov. 2002, 86; AlertNet 29 Aug. 2002).

Some of the organizations that have studied the increase in the number of children living on the streets in the DRC attribute this phenomenon, among others, to war, the deterioration of socio-economic conditions, and the breakdown of family and communal support systems (Watchlist June 2003, 11; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002; Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3).

An increasing number of street children in Kinshasa are considered to be 'child witches' (AlertNet 29 Aug. 2002; *The Guardian* 11 May 2003; Internews 29 Apr. 2003). Though relatively new, this phenomenon is on the rise in all Congolese provinces (ASADHO Mar. 2003, 17; Watchlist June 2003, 12). According to Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict, boys and girls in Kinshasa and other urban areas who are accused of witchcraft are turned out of their homes by their parents or by other family members (ibid.).

According to the results of a study conducted in Kinshasa by the International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE), 31 per cent of so-called child witches in the capital are from Équateur, 21 per cent are from Lower Congo or East Kasai, and 15 per cent are from Bandundu (22 Nov. 2002, 4). The author of the study explained that [translation] "the high percentage of children in Kinshasa who are from these provinces is due to the fact that the city is easily accessible and basically populated by people from the above-mentioned provinces" (BICE 22 Nov. 2002, 4).

Observers attribute the proliferation of 'child witches' on the streets mainly to parents' inability to care for their children (BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002; AlertNet 29 Aug. 2002; *The Guardian* 11 May 2003; Tumwaka 14 Nov. 2002, 1). Any unfortunate event, such as the loss of employment or a death in the family, merely serves as an excuse to get rid of a child (ibid., 5; BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002). Because the child is vulnerable, he or she is singled out, accused of being the cause of the problem, and eventually relegated to the streets (ibid.; BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Internews 29 Apr. 2003). One source indicated that sometimes a child is accused of witchcraft simply on the basis of an undesirable attitude or behaviour (ANB-BIA 1 Nov. 2001).

The growing number of religious sects in the DRC is also related to the increase in 'child witches' (Tumwaka 14 Nov. 2002, 2-3; ANB-BIA 1 Nov. 2001). In fact, parents who have fallen on hard times often turn to these sects for immediate solutions to their problems, in exchange for a fee; because of their vulnerability, children are apparently the most convenient scapegoats and they are blamed for all of their accusers' misfortunes (Agence de presse protestante 27 May 2003).

Child prostitution is also on the rise on the streets of large Congolese cities and is reportedly due in part to the fact that many parents cannot afford to send their children to school; these idle children therefore find themselves on the streets without any supervision (ASADHO Mar. 2003, 17; Muhimuzi 15 Oct. 2003). Some children are even forced by their parents to drop out of school and support their families through prostitution, work or begging (*Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5; Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; ASADHO Mar. 2003, 17).

Diseases such as AIDS also contribute significantly to the problem of street children (PANA 1 Mar. 2001; Watchlist June 2003, 11). A considerable number of children orphaned due to HIV/AIDS, currently estimated to be as high as 930,000 by Save the Children, find themselves on the streets of

large cities, which significantly increases the risk of HIV transmission (Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3).

Sources also noted that if child soldiers are not reunited with their families once they are demobilized, they often end up joining the ranks of street children in the large cities (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.5; Watchlist June 2003, 11). Amnesty International reported that a large number of demobilized children cannot return to their native villages and find themselves on the streets of Kinshasa without any means of support (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 3.5.3). According to this human rights organization, [AI English version] "[t]he future for many of the demobilised *kadogos* [child soldiers] in Kinshasa appears bleak" (ibid.). Massive displacement of civilians due to the war has contributed to the phenomenon of street children (Watchlist June 2003, 11). According to the data available, the war has led to the displacement of approximately 400,000 children (AI Sept. 2003), many of whom have been separated from their parents during their displacement and [AI English version] "are more likely to be recruited as they do not have any protectors" (ibid. 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.1).

3. TREATMENT OF CHILDREN

Despite substantial commitments by all parties to end the recruitment of children, there are a great many child soldiers throughout the DRC, where they continue to be used by combatants in armed conflict, as labourers, or as sex slaves (Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3; United Nations 21 Feb. 2003, para. 36; Watchlist June 2003, 26; HRW July 2003; AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 1 and 2.1). Some of these children are killed in combat (ibid., Sec. 1; UNICEF 6 June 2003) or forced to take part in [UNICEF English version] "horrific violence" (ibid.). Others suffer serious psychological distress and are [AI English version] "deeply traumatized by their experiences and continue to be haunted by the memories of the abuses they have witnessed or been forced to commit" (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.2; see also United Nations 6 June 2003).

Most of the belligerents have also raped children (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 2.3; HRW June 2002). Some observers agree, however, that it is in the eastern regions of the country that large-scale rape of women and children takes place (ibid.; IRIN 1 Oct. 2003; *Le Soir* 10 Sept. 2003). According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), in the Kivu region, [HRW English version] "[s]exual violence has been used as a weapon of war by most of the forces involved in this conflict," and members of these forces [HRW English version] "have frequently and sometimes systematically raped women and girls" (June 2002). After touring this part of the country, Tony Hall, the US ambassador to the United Nations World Food Program (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD), said that [IRIN English version] "more than 5,000 women, young girls and children had reported being raped in the past three months alone" in the province of South Kivu (IRIN 1 Oct. 2003).

Street children are also often subjected to violence and physical abuse (Watchlist June 2003, 12; Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; *Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5). They are reportedly [Watchlist English version] "regularly targeted for roundups by authorities, police and/or military" (Watchlist June 2003, 12; see also Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; *Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5). Violent confrontations between street children and police in Kinshasa resulted in the death of one child in 2002 (United Nations 22 Aug. 2003), and in the shooting and killing of one child and the arrest of 10 or so others in August 2001 (ibid.; VSV 15 Aug. 2001; BBC 16 Aug. 2001). The August 2002 confrontation ensued following a police roundup of children dubbed 'Operation Kanga Vagabonds' by the government (United Nations 22 Aug. 2002). According to *Country Reports 2002*, "[a]t several points during the year, government forces rounded up children living on the street [in Kinshasa] and transferred them to group facilities outside the city" and, in some cases, these facilities were not adequate (31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5).

In his study *La violence faite à l'enfant dit sorcier à Kinshasa*, Perpétue Madungu Tumwaka provided a concise table of the different forms of violence used against children (14 Nov. 2002, 6). According to this study, the most common abuses against these children are, in decreasing order of frequency, verbal abuse, beatings and injuries, curses, food deprivation, mockery, abandonment and solitude, neglect by teachers, burns to the bodies, death threats and the loss of liberty, such as being locked in a room (Tumwaka 14 Nov. 2002, 6). The study also specifies that child witches are subjected to violence at home, in their neighbourhoods and at school (ibid.).

Some street children who are accused of witchcraft are also physically abused and tortured during so-called exorcisms (Internews 29 Apr. 2003; BICE 13 Mar. 2003) performed in certain churches (BBC 17 Jan. 2003). Some children have died in these ceremonies (Internews 29 Apr. 2003; BICE 13 Mar. 2003). According to BICE, two child witches died in Kinshasa in 2002 [translation] "of torture inflicted upon them under the guise of exorcism" (13 Mar. 2003).

Furthermore, some reports indicated that child labour involving very young children is widespread in the DRC (*Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5; BIDE 20 Mar. 2003, 5). Young children are used mainly in the informal primary sector, particularly in agriculture and fishing (ibid.; *Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5).

4. PROTECTION AND SERVICES OFFERED BY THE GOVERNMENT

The principles set out in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child have not yet been integrated into Congolese domestic legislation (Tumwaka 14 Nov. 2002, 3; United Nations 9 July 2001, para. 8). This delay would explain why the general population knows little about this convention (ibid., para. 18; Tumwaka 14 Nov. 2002, 3), and may be the reason for [translation] "the widespread lack of respect for children's rights" in this country (ibid.). According to BICE, [translation] "the notion of child abuse does not exist in Congolese legislation" (BICE 22 Nov. 2002, 9). Congolese law permits, among other things, corporal punishment of children (United Nations 9 July 2001, para. 38).

Under Congolese legislation, street children are considered delinquents (Watchlist June 2003, 12; BICE 22 Nov. 2002, 6). They are often arrested by police for [translation] "vagrancy" (ibid. 2003, 17). Although the exorcism rituals that these children are often subjected to are [translation] "traumatizing and affect their health" (ibid.), Congolese legal authorities rarely intervene (Internews 29 Apr. 2003; Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; Funsu 3 Oct. 2003). According to BICE, [translation] "judicial police officers [officiers de la police judiciaire, OPJ] do not know what to do with these children, so they either lay charges against them or hold them in custody longer than permitted by law" at the police station (22 Nov. 2002, 6).

Moreover, since the [Watchlist English version] "breakdown of basic social services" in the DRC (Watchlist June 2003, 26), there have been almost no government services available to children (*Country Reports 2002* 31 Mar. 2003, Sec. 5; Funsu 3 Oct. 2003; Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003). Several sources reported that budget allocations for health, education and other areas of direct relevance to children are very minimal (ibid.; United Nations 9 July 2001, para. 12; ASADHO Mar. 2003, 17). According to the African Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Congo/Kinshasa (Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme, ASADHO), the Congolese government allocates no more than 0.01 per cent of its budget to education (ibid.).

5. SERVICES OFFERED BY VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

Many international organizations are involved in protecting children in the DRC, such as UNICEF, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) (Watchlist June 2003, 9-12), Médecins du monde, Oxfam (United Nations 22 Aug. 2002; Médecins du monde n.d.a; RFI 16 June 2002), and Save the Children (ibid.; United Nations 22 Aug. 2002; Save the Children 2003, 7; Kibembi 24 Oct. 2003).

For example, Save the Children works in Kinshasa and in the provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, East Kasai and Ituri, and focuses on demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers (Save the Children Aug. 2003, 1). Médecins du monde operates primarily in the health sector, but also provides socio-psychological support to vulnerable children (Médecins du monde 9 July 2002). This organization calculates that 1,500 street children benefit from its direct involvement in Kinshasa (ibid.), and its activities reach as far as Kongolo, in northern Katanga (RDC Mar. 2003). The ICRC, which works to reunite families in all provinces of the country, reported that it had managed to reunite 730 children with their families since early 2003 (26 Sept. 2003).

Amigo Ngonde Funsu, President of ASADHO, and Dolly Ibefo, Vice-President of Voix des sans voix (VSV), both from Kinshasa, stated that hundreds of organizations in Kinshasa, as elsewhere in the country, are working at the local level to help underprivileged children, but their effectiveness is limited by a lack of financial resources (Funsu 3 Oct. 2003; Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003). Pascal Kabungulu Kibembi counted more than 11 such organizations in the town of Bukavu alone, including Les Amis de Jésus, the Centre de récupération des enfants de la rue (CRER) and the Fondation Terre des hommes (Kibembi 24 Oct. 2003). According to him, [translation] "their involvement consists mainly of taking care of the social, psychological, medical, legal and vocational needs" of vulnerable children (ibid.).

However, faced with the overwhelming needs of children in the DRC, some local observers believe that international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) need to become more involved (Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; Funsu 3 Oct. 2003). In a report published in 2001, the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that it

[UN English version]

> "notes the collaboration between the State party and some NGOs but remains concerned that co-operation with other NGOs working in favour of children's rights is insufficient. The Committee is deeply concerned, in particular, by the reported high numbers of arrests and detentions of some NGO staff and the restrictions placed on NGO registration and activities" (9 July 2001, para. 16).

Médecins du monde pointed out that the existing local structures operate with [translation] "very limited means and that they sometimes have to close down" (n.d.b). Amnesty International also underlined the lack of resources for local organizations when it reported that three unidentified local NGOs, which accommodated former child soldiers and eased their transition back into the community, were in jeopardy due to insufficient funding (AI 9 Sept. 2003, Sec. 3.5.3). To better meet the needs of underprivileged children in the DRC, Médecins du monde and other international NGOs have agreed to improve the coordination of their activities and share resources and information more effectively (Médecins du monde n.d.a; RFI 16 June 2002).

6. FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

Since 30 June 2003, the date on which a national transitional government was established, the DRC has been in a period of transition that is expected to culminate in democratic elections in 2005 (*Le*

Figaro 18 July 2003; IRIN 1 July 2003; *Jeune Afrique/L'Intelligent* 6-12 July 2003, 62). This date also marks the official end of a deadly war that began in August 1998 (ibid., 63). However, after a recent tour of Africa's Great Lakes region, Amnesty International Secretary-General Irene Khan expressed her belief that the setting up of a transitional government in Kinshasa had had no effect on the situation in the eastern regions of the country (IRIN 21 Oct. 2003). She also added that the problem of child soldier recruitment had only worsened in that part of the DRC (ibid.). According to an Amnesty International document, [translation] "for many Congolese, peace is a distant dream," because [translation] "slaughter, mutilation and rape are still taking place in the Ituri and Kivu regions of eastern DRC" (Sept. 2003).

An article published on 11 November 2003, more than four months after the transitional government was established and the war ended, indicated that the women and children of this country were still victims of serious human rights violations (IRIN 11 Nov. 2003). The article went on to say that children continued to be recruited by combat forces (ibid.).

As mentioned previously, according to some observers, the difficult situation in which many children in the DRC find themselves is due to various socio-economic problems (Watchlist June 2003, 11; Médecins du monde 20 Nov. 2002; BBC 17 Jan. 2003; Save the Children Aug. 2003, 3). Furthermore, the actions of the government and NGOs on behalf of these children are considered to be insufficient (Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003; Funsu 3 Oct. 2003). In the future, it would be interesting not only to assess the real effect of the end of the war on the situation of children in the DRC, but also to verify whether government authorities and other organizations took any additional measures to help children.

NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

International Catholic Child Bureau (BICE)
Founded in Geneva in 1948, the International Catholic Child Bureau's mission is [BICE English version] "to protect children who are exploited sexually or by work, children in the street, in prison or affected by war as well as disabled children" (BICE n.d.a). The BICE delegation in the DRC is responsible for [BICE English version] "[d]efending and promoting the rights of children deprived of their freedom, and children imprisoned with their mothers as well as child 'sorcerers'" (ibid. n.d.b). Though active only in Kinshasa at this time, the BICE hopes to extend its activities to Kananga and Mbuji-Mayi [BICE English version] "shortly" (ibid.).

International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR)
The Montreal-based International Bureau for Children's Rights (IBCR) is [IBCR English version] "an international non-governmental organization created in 1994 to ensure that children's rights are respected, to identify and draw attention to the root causes of violations of children's rights and to seek practical solutions through investigation, public awareness and international cooperation" (IBCR n.d.). For more information on the IBCR, please consult its Website at <http://www.ibcr.org/index.html>.

Funsu, Amigo Ngonde
Amigo Ngonde Funsu has a degree in police science and criminology from the University of Kinshasa (Funsu 3 Oct. 2003). He was a founding member and is currently the president of the African Association for the Defense of Human Rights in Congo/Kinshasa (Association africaine de défense des droits de l'homme, ASADHO), formerly AZADHO (ibid.).

ASADHO is a non-governmental human rights organization in the DRC (ASADHO 2000). Founded in 1991, it publishes documents such as reports and brochures on human rights and freedoms, and it

provides legal and medical assistance to prisoners (ibid.). ASADHO is affiliated with the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) (ibid.).

Ibefo, Dolly
Dolly Ibefo has a degree in educational sciences from the University of Kinshasa (Ibefo 2 Oct. 2003). He has been a member of the human rights organization La Voix des sans-voix (VSV) for 11 years, and has held the position of Vice-President for the last four years (ibid.).

Based in Kinshasa, VSV is one of the oldest human rights organizations in the DRC (Rosenblum 1994). According to one source, VSV publishes well-documented reports on the human rights situation in Kinshasa (ibid.). For more information on VSV and its publications, please consult its Website at <http://www.congonline.com/vsv/index.html>.

Kibembi, Pascal Kabungulu
Pascal Kabungulu Kibembi has a degree in applied education from the Institut supérieur pédagogique (ISP) in Bukavu (Kabungulu 24 Oct. 2003). In addition to being the Second Vice-President for the Great Lakes Human Rights League, a very active network of human rights associations and collectives in Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC, he is also the Executive Secretary of Héritiers de la justice (ibid.).

Héritiers de la justice is a non-governmental human rights and peace organization, which has its head office in Bukavu, capital of the province South Kivu (Héritiers de la justice n.d.). The main activities carried out by Héritiers de la justice consist of training local leaders, educating the public, and promoting peace and awareness on local, regional and international levels (ibid.). For more information on Héritiers de la Justice, please visit its Website at <http://www.heritiers.org>.

Muhimuzi, Élise Kindja
Élise Kindja Muhimuzi holds degrees in applied economics and in management from the Université catholique de Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium, and she has a degree in applied education from the University of Kinshasa (Muhimuzi 15 Oct. 2003). She was a history professor at the Institut pédagogique national (IPN), then a coordinator for the NGO Collectif de diffusion, d'information et d'appui aux femmes, before becoming the permanent Secretary of the National Committee for Women in Development (Comité national Femme et développement, CONAFED).

According to the Societecivile.cd Website, the portal of civil society organizations in the DRC, [translation] "CONAFED is a national gender-based analysis network that was created in 1997, on the initiative of the National Council of Non-Governmental Development Organizations (Conseil national des ONG de développement, CNONGD). . . . CONAFED'S main goal is to promote, using a gender-based approach, a society in which men and women can relate to one another while maintaining a balance of their rights and responsibilities within their relationships" (n.d.).

Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict
The New York-based organization Watchlist on Children and Armed Conflict compiles and distributes information to ensure that the security and rights of children in armed conflicts around the world are protected (Watchlist n.d.). To do this, Watchlist obtains information from NGOs, UN agencies and child rights experts, and then prepares reports that give a comprehensive picture of children's lives in specific geographic areas (ibid.). For more information on Watchlist, please consult its Website at <http://www.watchlist.org/index.php>.

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