

WAR AND ITS VICTIMS

Denied the Right to Walk the Earth

The right of the child to special protection in armed conflicts is being violated every day by the estimated 100 million land-mines that adults have planted in the soils of at least 62 countries.

With a 'shelf life' up to 50 years, mines indiscriminately destroy limbs, lives and livelihoods. Fertile farmland is left uncultivated, roads abandoned, and water sources made unsafe.

Children are particularly vulnerable to the mines, most of which are triggered by pressure, even the light weight of a child, or by a trip-wire. Some kill or maim by explosive force, other spew metal fragments.

Afghanistan with 9 to 10 million mines has the distinction of being the world's most heavily mined country. Angola, with about 9 million, is a close second. Cambodia, where the 12 year civil war has left the countryside littered with 4 to 7 million mines, comes third in the lethal league table.

More than 362 types of land-mine are currently made in 55 countries.

Mines Moratoriums

Fifteen countries so far have announced comprehensive export moratoriums on anti-personnel land-mines.

Argentina	Italy
Belgium	Poland
Canada	Slovakia
Czech Rep.	South Africa
France	Spain
Germany	Sweden
Greece	United States
Israel	

In addition, the Netherlands and Switzerland have banned exports to states that are not adherents to Protocol II (the land-mine section) of the Convention on Conventional Weapons.

The Russian Federation and the United Kingdom have imposed an indefinite moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines that do not self destruct or self-neutralize.

Most of the casualties of modern wars are not soldiers but civilians a high proportion of them children. In the last decade, an estimated 2 million children have been killed in armed conflicts. Perhaps 4 to 5 million more have been disabled, and more than 12 million made homeless.

Many more millions have been traumatized by the atrocities they have been forced to witness or take part in.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child calls on governments to take special measures to protect children in the event of armed conflict. It also bans the use of children as soldiers-common practice in several of the wars of recent years including those in Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq and Mozambique.

Statistics on children affected by war are scarce. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that approximately 23 million men, women and children across the world have left their homelands to escape persecution and violence.

In addition, there are an estimated 26 million 'internal refugees' who have been forced to leave their homes but who have not crossed national boundaries.

In the refugee populations for which relevant data are available, the proportion of under 18s is regularly more than 50%.

To and from

Nearly half of the world's estimated 23 million refugees have fled from just five countries. Other UNHCR surveys of refugee and displaced populations in 13 countries show that half or more are under 18.

From	Afghanistan	2,800,000
To	Iran	1,600,000
	Pakistan	1,200,000
From	Rwanda	2,000,000
To	Zaire	1,100,000
	Tanzania	600,000
	Burundi and Others	300,000
From	Liberia	846,000
To	Guinea	450,000
	Cote d'Ivoire	360,000
	Ghana	16,000
	Sierra Leone	16,000
	Nigeria	4,000
From	Somalia	510,000
To	Ethiopia	240,000
	Kenya	170,000
	Yemen and Others	80,000
	Djibouti	20,000
From	Bosnia	2,700,000
	Serbia	405,000
	Croatia	380,000
	UN protected areas	1 22,000
	Macedonia and Slovenia	49,000
	Montenegro	44,000