

# PRF Newsletter

## Inside this issue:

Global Peace Survey	1
Children, War, and Political Violence	1
Hotel Rwanda—A Review	2
Political Forgiveness	3
In the News	4
Natural Resources and Conflict	4
Children and War	4
Women and War	6

## Global Peace Survey

The promotion of peace as well as the prevention and resolution of conflicts takes various forms. Peace Research Foundation (PRF) trusts that one way of contributing to peace is to share information and knowledge on issues related to peace and conflict, to help people to become aware of ongoing conflicts and its severe causes. Empowering people with information and knowledge would enable them to effectively engage in peace at different levels, to actively participate in real-world peacemaking and peacebuilding processes. Therefore, the PRF undertook Global Peace Survey project in May of 2003, the main objective of which is to compile, organize, disseminate and share information among academicians, researchers, students, practitioners and anyone else interested in peace and conflict resolution. Our goal is to make GPS a powerful tool dedicated to help the users to find information that addresses their specific needs. We believe that sharing information and educating people on issues related to peace helps to contribute directly or indirectly to the prevention of conflicts and supports the emergence of sustainable peace processes worldwide.

## Children, War, and Political Violence

The end of the Cold War marked turbulent changes within the international milieu as the international community witnessed an escalated proliferation of armed conflicts. Wars in Liberia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, Kosovo, East Timor, and Rwanda have claimed hundreds of thousands of lives of women and children. Youth who are exposed to extreme violence may become both victims and perpetrators of the violence. Children are used as child soldiers in Liberia, Sudan, and Sri Lanka as rival gangs use children to fight in paramilitary organizations voluntarily or usually as forced conscripts.

Young people who grow-up in war zones where riots, shootings, bombings, and a cycle of violence are an everyday occurrence are socialized to perceive that violence as normal. Young people may begin to accept and expect violence, and to model it after repeated exposure. A violent environment provides aggressive role models and may influence young people to behave aggressively. Repeated exposure to war and violence increases the risk that young adults will engage in future violence and antisocial behavior.

During their formative years, young people can learn to accept violence as the norm to solve problems, which becomes difficult to change in adulthood impacting the moral and political development of young people. Nevertheless, most young people have the cognitive capacity to cope with the violence providing the necessary parental and communal support is present. Young people can also learn to both cope and develop resiliency skills through the mentoring of parents, family, friends, and community. It is the process of building such skills that needs more attention and concern.

*Sean Byrne, Professor and Director  
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Don Cheadle (Paul)

*“When a country descended  
into madness,  
And the world closed its eyes,  
He opened his arms,  
And created a place,  
Where hope could survive.”*

## Hotel Rwanda - A Review

In 1994, tensions between the two primary tribes in Rwanda, the Hutus and the Tutsis, exploded into full out war after the airplane carrying President Habyarimana and Cyprien Ntaryamira, the President of Burundi was shot down as it prepared to land in Kigali on April 6, 1994. Both presidents were killed when the plane crashed. The exact responsibility for this act is not known, though the popular belief is that it was radical Hutu nationalists in the presidential guard. What followed was one hundred days of human savagery unthinkable to even the most imaginative mind.

Hotel Rwanda provides a human face to the horror that unfolded during the Rwandan genocide. It chronicles the true story of Paul Rusesabagina, a resourceful Hutu manager of a posh, dignified Hotel Des Mille Collines, located on Belgian ground in Kigali. Amidst the carnage and devastation that followed the assassination of the president, Rusesabagina, the soft-spoken Hutu manager of the hotel who with his Tutsi wife, Tatiana (brilliantly played by Sophie Okonedo) and children, narrowly escapes death several times while trying to save those he was sheltering from certain death. Ultimately, Mr. Rusesabagina was directly responsible for saving

the lives of more than 1,200 Tutsis and Hutu moderates by sheltering them in the hotel and bribing the Hutu military to spare them. Using his connections as a four-star hotel manager, Paul sweet-talks, bribes and blackmails military and government officials in his frantic bid to save the lives of 1200 people.

As Paul, Don Cheadle’s performance is awe-inspiring. He gives a touching portrayal of frantic internal struggling that Paul experiences when he has to decide between abandoning the hotel and saving the lives of his family on the one hand, and staying on and using all the resources at his disposal to save the lives of hundreds who were staring certain violent death in the face and saw in him their only hope for survival. His story is that of a steady hand in a vortex of hate and human decimation. It is indeed a worthy model for bravery and leadership. Hotel Rwanda further gives a frightening mind-boggling yet extremely accurate portrayal of how the mass media could be used to promote ethnic hatred and extermination. Ultimately, Hotel Rwanda is an honest, emotionally complex film that will either destroy or reaffirm your belief in the intrinsic goodness of man.

## Political Forgiveness

Although people have practiced forgiveness for thousands of years, it did not attract any significant scholarly interest before the twentieth century and until as recent as the 1980's, forgiveness was largely regarded as a theological concept with little interest from those outside the theological domain. The last few years have, however, seen a myriad of publications on the subject from fields such as philosophy, politics, psychology, international relations and pastoral care. With the escalation of ethnic and civil conflicts of the most brutal kind, there has even been the emergence of a new line of inquiry, which looks at forgiveness as a political construct.

A major debate that characterizes forgiveness research is whether forgiveness is an unconditional response of one person within the context of a violation, or whether there are certain conditions attached to the act of forgiving. Some theorists argue that authentic forgiveness is an unconditional and unilateral act that is entirely independent of the actions of the wrongdoer. This view is consistent with forgiveness as propagated in Christianity where ideal acts of forgiveness mirrors unconditional divine forgiveness, thus requiring neither punishment, recompense nor guarantees for future behaviour (Scobie & Scobie, 1996). In opposition to this view, is the belief of forgiveness as dependent on certain conditions, although there is little unanimity as to what these conditions are. Some of the more common conditions include confession, apology, justice, etc.

Various models of forgiveness can be discerned (Scobie & Scobie, 1998). The health model is associated with psychotherapy and counselling and emphasizes the therapeutic value of forgiveness. The moral philosophical model, sees forgiveness primarily as a moral response with the emphasis being on 'moral being' or the reasons why one would forgive, rather than on 'moral doing' (acts of forgiveness). The religious model emphasizes the role that most religions play in centering and moti-

vating people to forgive. The pro-social model sees forgiveness as a pro-social facilitator when a damaging event has caused a breakdown of a relationship.

Related to the models are the different levels on which forgiveness can take place at various levels as well. The most basic level is known as the intrapersonal level, which is based on the premise that forgiveness is a unilateral act by someone who has been hurt. This level is also referred to as unilateral forgiveness (Molly, 2000) and intrapsychic forgiveness (Doyle, 1999). At the interpersonal level, forgiveness is not conceptualised as a social transaction of interpersonal relations. Increased attention is now also given to the intergroup level of forgiveness. Cassidy (in Lotter, 1996, pp. 2-3) argues that: "...if the way of forgiveness is morally and spiritually valid for individuals, I see no reason why it should not be so for groups, tribes or nations". Thus forgiveness has emerged as an appropriate method for resolving political conflicts between groups. Row, Halling, Davies, Leifer, Powers and von Bronkhorst (1989) assert that because forgiveness serves to change the significance of past deeds, it has enormous implications at a personal as well as a societal level. This realization of the viability of forgiveness within the political realm has given birth to what is Shriver and others call political forgiveness. Theorists and practitioners have begun to explore the potential that forgiveness holds for healing nations that are in the midst of post conflict reconstruction. This is not surprising, given the fact that: "Today, the most vicious wars on the planet...are among peoples who have old grievances with one another and who have failed, in some respect, to forgive. By contrast, the great hopes for peace lie in regions where long time enemies seem surprisingly prepared (at least) to consider laying aside old grievances..." (Glynn, 1994).

## IN THE NEWS

### Natural Resources and Conflict



Grasberg Gold Mine,  
West Papua

According to the Global Policy Forum, natural resources often lie at the heart of wars and civil strife. “Huge mining and resource companies, including giants like Exxon Mobil and Anglo American/DeBeers, do not hesitate to use force in pursuit of their corporate interests. There are many players in this bloody nexus of natural resources and conflict, including shadowy resource traders, smugglers, corrupt local officials, arms dealers, transport operators and mercenary companies. Increasing scarcity of resources, driven by rising world population and the spread of unsustainable consumption, further sharpen such conflicts. NGOs, investigative journalists and UN expert panels have revealed some of the players in these clandestine networks and spotlighted governments that give them comfort, in the North as well as the South. This page looks especially at diamonds, oil, water and timber, as well as the broader issues of natural resources in conflict.”

Source: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/security/docs/minindx.htm>

### Children and War

*The ICRC launched a new tracing campaign in cooperation with the Liberia National Red Cross Society*

Entitled “Help us come home,” the campaign will use posters and booklets showing pictures of 343 Liberian children registered by the ICRC in Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria and Sierra Leone to help to reunite the children with their families. The materials will be displayed and distributed in markets, hospitals, schools and refugee camps in Liberia and surrounding countries. Awareness-raising activities, such as a play performed by members of the Liberian Red Cross, will clarify the purpose of the campaign and the use of the printed materials.

ICRC delegations and National Red Cross Societies throughout West Africa have joined forces with other humanitarian organizations and community members to trace the relatives of Liberian children separated from their families during the civil war. In Liberia alone, over 200 National Society volunteers are involved in tracing activities.

Since the civil war ended, the ICRC has stepped up its tracing work in various regions of Liberia. Since 2002 it has already run four campaigns similar to the one launched today. Because of these efforts, more than 600 Liberian children are now back with their families. The ICRC is currently handling some 1,500 cases and an average of 15 children are rejoining their families every week. In 2003, the ICRC reunited 2,640 people – most of them children – with their families worldwide.

Source: <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/67GN8Y!OpenDocument>

*Democratic Republic of the Congo: 85 children reunited with their families*

The ICRC completed a series of flights that returned 85 unaccompanied children to their families in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Most of the children had been separated from their families by the fighting that started in 1996. The ICRC registered them, located their families and enabled them to get back in touch via the Red Cross message network.

Children are only reunited with their families if both child and family agree. In addition, the ICRC has to contact many different agencies and conduct extensive research before reunification can take place. Efforts to bring families back together are under way throughout the country, with volunteers from the Red Cross Society of the Democratic Republic of the Congo playing an important role.

Source: <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/66MLVG!OpenDocument>

## IN THE NEWS

### Children and War (continued)

#### *Syria: ICRC launches "Children and War" campaign*

The ICRC recently launched its "Children and War" campaign in Syria. The opening event, held at al-Assad Library Auditorium, was attended by Assma al-Assad, wife of Syria's president, as well as various ministers, ambassadors, academics and representatives of international organizations, the media and Syrian child-aid organizations. It was organized to raise public awareness of the plight of children affected by armed conflict and of the campaign activities planned for the coming year. There was a stark contrast between the video clips viewed by audience of the suffering endured by children in war and the normal pleasures of children dancing and singing on the auditorium stage.

In current conflicts, widespread lack of respect for and ignorance of international humanitarian law means that children caught up in war are exposed to the risk of death and severe injury but also to other terrible ordeals such as separation from their loved ones, a pitiless struggle for survival in a hostile environment, imprisonment, economic exploitation, recruitment by warring parties, and sexual abuse. The humanitarian law in force prescribes wide-ranging protection for children. While already benefiting from the general protection afforded civilians not taking part in hostilities, 25 provisions of the four Geneva Conventions and their Additional Protocols grant children special protection.

The year-long "Children and War" campaign is being carried out in close cooperation with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. In addition to publicizing the particular problems faced by children affected by armed conflict, its purpose is to spread knowledge of the basic rules of humanitarian law.

*Source:*

<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList581/7A38A110B38AAD33C1256E86004F9D6B>

#### *Victims and perpetrators: Issues of responsibility relating to the problem of child soldiers in Africa*

The responsibility under international law of those who recruit children and the responsibility of child soldiers who commit serious violations of the laws of war are both examined in this article, with particular reference to practice and experience in Africa. Specific examples are given of the practice of Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. What follows is an abstract from an article published by the International Committee of the Red Cross.

This article investigates the issues of responsibility relating to the problem of child soldiers, in particular with respect to practice and experience in Africa. After preliminary remarks on the approach of international humanitarian law to the definition of a child, the first part of the article discusses the prohibitions on recruiting children and on the participation of children in hostilities as rules of international law. The second part examines the United Nations Security Council's approach to the issue of the responsibility of States and armed groups for violations of these rules. The individual criminal responsibility of the recruiters is then considered, in particular with a view to establishing whether the crime of recruiting and using child soldiers is customary in nature. The fourth and last part of the article examines the dilemma of the criminal responsibility of children for crimes under international law and the practice of Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Sierra Leone.

*Source:*

<http://www.icrc.org/web/eng/siteeng0.nsf/iwpList520/9B3FF03F29E2CCDEC1256E4A004D45FD>

## IN THE NEWS

### Women and War

Countless women and girls all over the world suffer the trauma of war - as widows or orphans, perhaps displaced from their homes, sometimes detained. They are often separated from loved ones and become victims of violence and intimidation. For the most part they are civilians caught in the crossfire, and show astonishing resourcefulness and resilience in coping with the disintegration of their families, the loss of their home and their belongings and the destruction of their lives. Women can also be fighters, and as such as are due the same respect as men if wounded or captured. They are also bound by the same rules prohibiting illegal acts against other fighters or civilians.

International humanitarian law, which grants general protection to all war victims, regardless of gender, provides extensive specific protection for women in war. If these rules were better observed, the suffering faced by women in war would be greatly reduced.

Source: <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/htmlall/women?OpenDocument>



Musu

#### *Working with women affected by war*

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) on their website recently featured the story of a Liberian woman called Musu (picture on the left). Musu is on her own with five children to feed in a country that lies in ruins; her husband was killed during the conflict in Liberia. Below is a photograph of Musu.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) endeavors to help women like Musu meet their family's needs and, through them, rebuild lives and communities devastated by armed conflicts. Hundreds of thousands of women worldwide suffer the effects of armed conflicts. They end up as refugees or displaced persons, are taken captive, are wounded or disabled, fall victim to aggression and sexual violence. More often than not they are alone to look after their families, in unstable and deprived conditions. In such circumstances, women are not passive victims; they must and can find lasting and unifying solutions.


The Commission on the Status of Women has convened at United Nations headquarters in New York to assess the progress made in implementing the Platform for Action drawn up at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held in Beijing in 1995. The ICRC views this as an opportunity to measure the steps taken in the past ten years for more effective management of the effects of armed conflicts on women. By studying, coming to grips with and acknowledging women's specific needs in armed conflicts and the role they play in meeting those needs, the ICRC has been able to attune its programmes even more finely to such situations and to put women in a better position to take charge of their lives.

Some progress has been made, in particular where women have been actively involved in the decision-making process and have shouldered responsibilities. All too often, however, women are still the most secluded members of communities affected by armed conflict. They do not know their rights; they are invisible in the public domain, afraid to express their concerns or confronted by structures of authority from which they are excluded.

The challenge of Beijing therefore remains to be met, and a sustained effort needs to be made to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women and girls. In the context of armed conflicts, international humanitarian law must be respected, in particular so that women are protected and can play an active part in the survival and reconstruction of their communities.

Today, Musu is able to meet her children's needs thanks to a market-garden project set up by the ICRC for widows and women heads of household. The energy she has put into her work has instilled a sense of pride and freedom. Many women can be given similar responsibilities and thus alleviate the suffering caused around them by armed conflicts, if they receive tangible support from their communities.

Source: <http://www.icrc.org/Web/Eng/siteeng0.nsf/html/6A5N4Y?OpenDocument>



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