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AFRICAN UNION STUDY GUIDE



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I) Letter from Secretary-General

Distinguished

Prospective

Participants,

An exquisite feeling of immunity and pleasure besieges me as I am able to welcome you to the fifth annual gathering session of the Izmir University of Economics Model United Nations Conference namely ECOMUN. I shall indicate the determination I have regarding the ability to succeed of ECOMUN 2017 in the efforts of adapting your approaches on the animation of decision-making and innovative activities.

Evolving from this desire, our process of academic construction targets the quality in the controversy of international organizations and the pleasure in the intricate details of the diplomacy. The fast-paced and vital structure of politics and the prestigious strength of knowledge in negotiations will amount to an incomparable experience and ECOMUN 2017 will serve as a rehearsal for the MUN enthusiasts, who would like to feel themselves in reality. To facilitate the realization of this vision, we prepared our simulations on the idea of six different views of diplomacy. Delegates of the African Union will tackle the most crucial problems of the continent, being, violence in the Horn of Africa and recruitment of child soldiers by paramilitary groups.

It is my utmost wish that the design of ECOMUN 2017 excites and delights you as much as it drives us to excel. I would like to state that, on behalf of our Director-General Ms. Buse Bircan and Deputy Director-General Ms. Seray Güderel and all the members of the Teams of ECOMUN 2017, we are excitedly awaiting your arrival to Izmir Economy University on the 24th of July 2017.

Best

Regards,

Merve

NOYAN

Secretary-General of Izmir University of Economics Model United Nations 2017

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II) Letter from Under-Secretary-General

Most esteemed delegates of African Union,

It is an honour and pleasure to welcome you all to İzmir Economy University Model United Nations (ECOMUN) 2017. My name is Ege Sürek, and I am currently in my 3rd year at Yeditepe University, and I am doing my bachelors in Political Science and International Relations. It is my second year in ECOMUN and this year I have the privilege to serve as the Under-Secretary-General of the African Union and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

In this committee, you will have the chance to argue and hopefully solve two of the current dilemmas that the continent is facing. The first agenda focus on the Greater Horn of Africa and the never-ending violence in the region. Our second agenda is one of the most crucial issues the continent faces, the child soldiers. In the African Union, it will be your efforts that might create the stability that the continent and citizens crave for decades.

Before finishing my letter, I would like to thank Ms. Merve Noyan for giving me this opportunity to become the Under-Secretary-General for the African Union and having me on her team. Last but not least, I would like to thank and give my sincerest gratitude to my academic assistant Beste Özel, for supporting me through this process with her hard work.

Sincerely,

Ege Sürek

Under-Secretary-General for the African Union and UNEP

III) Introduction to Committee

African Union (AU) is a continental inter-governmental organisation that was established to succeed the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) on 26 May 2001. Its headquarter is in

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. At present, the organisation consists of 55 member states that reside in Africa. Since 2017 with Morocco's admission, all the countries that currently in the African continent is a member. The AU is the largest of the current continental organisations both population and area-wise.

AU has seventeen objectives under its Constitutive Act of the African Union. Some of the primary objectives of the organisation are;

“Achieve greater unity and solidarity between the African countries and Africans;

Defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its member states;

Promote peace, security, and stability on the continent;

Promote and protect human and peoples’ rights in accordance with the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights and other relevant human rights instruments;

Establish the necessary conditions which enable the continent to play its rightful role in the global economy and in international negotiations;

Promote sustainable development at the economic, social and cultural levels as well as the integration of African economies;

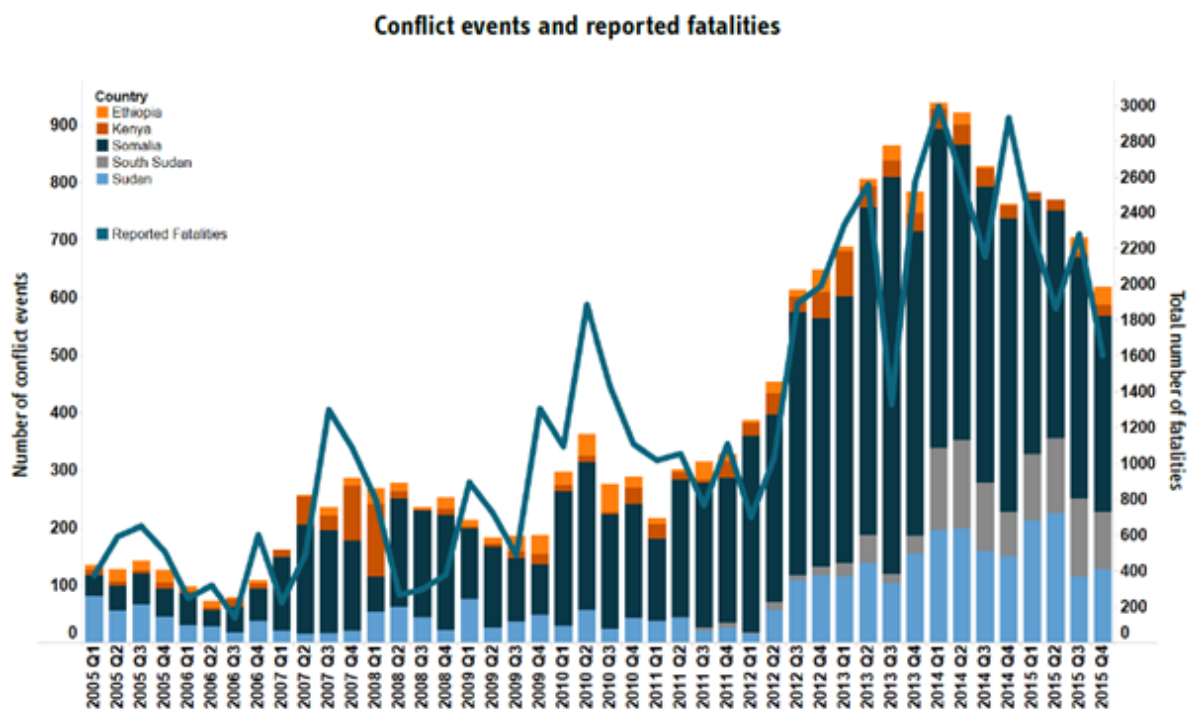
Promote co-operation in all fields of human activity to raise the living standards of African peoples”

The Union has several bodies tasked with different duties. The main decision-making body of AU is the Assembly of the African Union, with heads of member states as the decision makers. Also, there is the Pan-African Parliament which is the representative organ of AU, that has 256 members elected by the legislative bodies of member states. The Executive Council, Permanent Representatives Committee and the Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) are the other organs of AU.

IV) Agenda Item A: Reducing violence in the region with a focus on Horn of Africa

A) Background

The Horn of Africa has become known for its rapidly rising numbers of violent extremism. Although the news coverage mainly focuses on Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), al-Shabaab and terrorism in Somalia, the violence in the region is much complex and greater than that. Most of the countries in Horn of Africa has some issues with violence, whether it is the armed opposition groups in Djibouti or the severe suppression of the anti-government groups in Ethiopia to the conflicts in Darfur and South Sudan, there are various kinds of violence in the region.[i]



Source: ACLED (2016). Note: selected regional countries of the Greater Horn of Africa

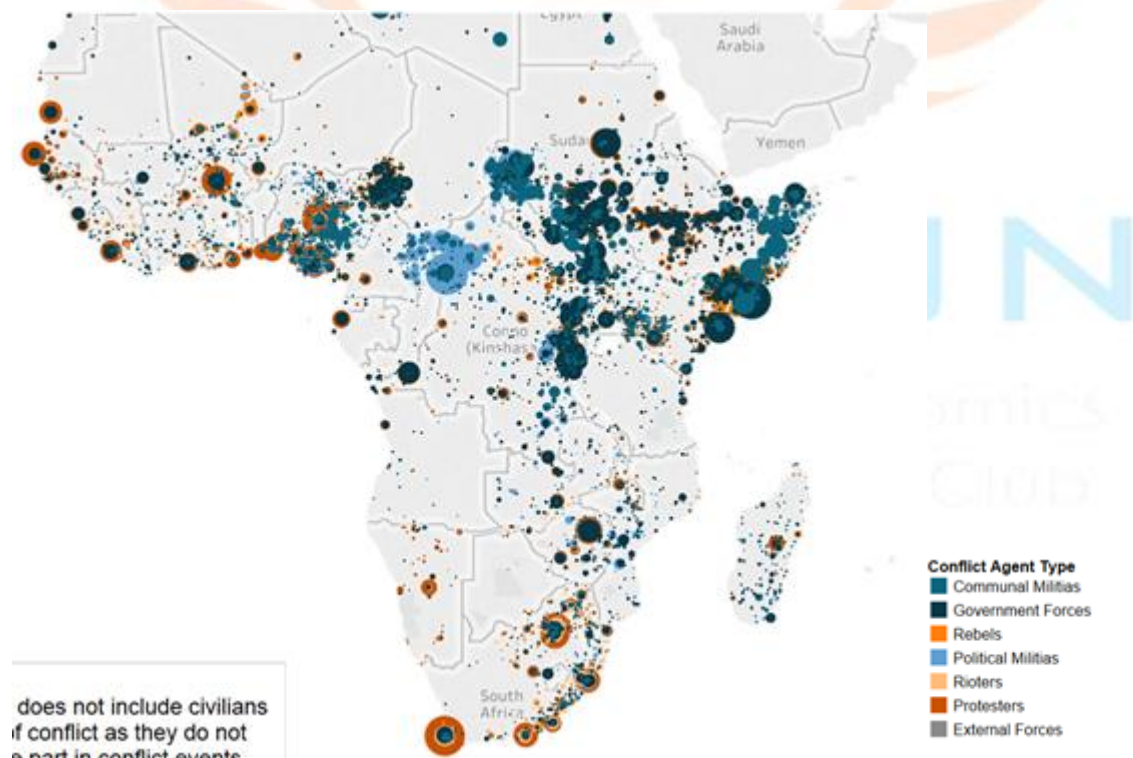
Poverty, displacement, food insecurity and political instability in the region are the reasons of recruitment for the extremist groups such as al-Shabaab, Sudan Liberation Movement or the Lord's Resistance Army.[ii]

In a world that is experiencing a rapid growth in terrorism in nearly every region, the variation of extremist groups and their control on territories are growing too. Most notably Boko Haram, al-Shabaab, al-Qaeda and partners of ISIL are the ones that organize attacks. Especially al-Shabaab is a significant threat in the region since they have been involved in the attacks on the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) or to the attacks on the military of Kenya and Uganda, both leading countries in counter-terrorism against al-Qaeda and partners. [iii]

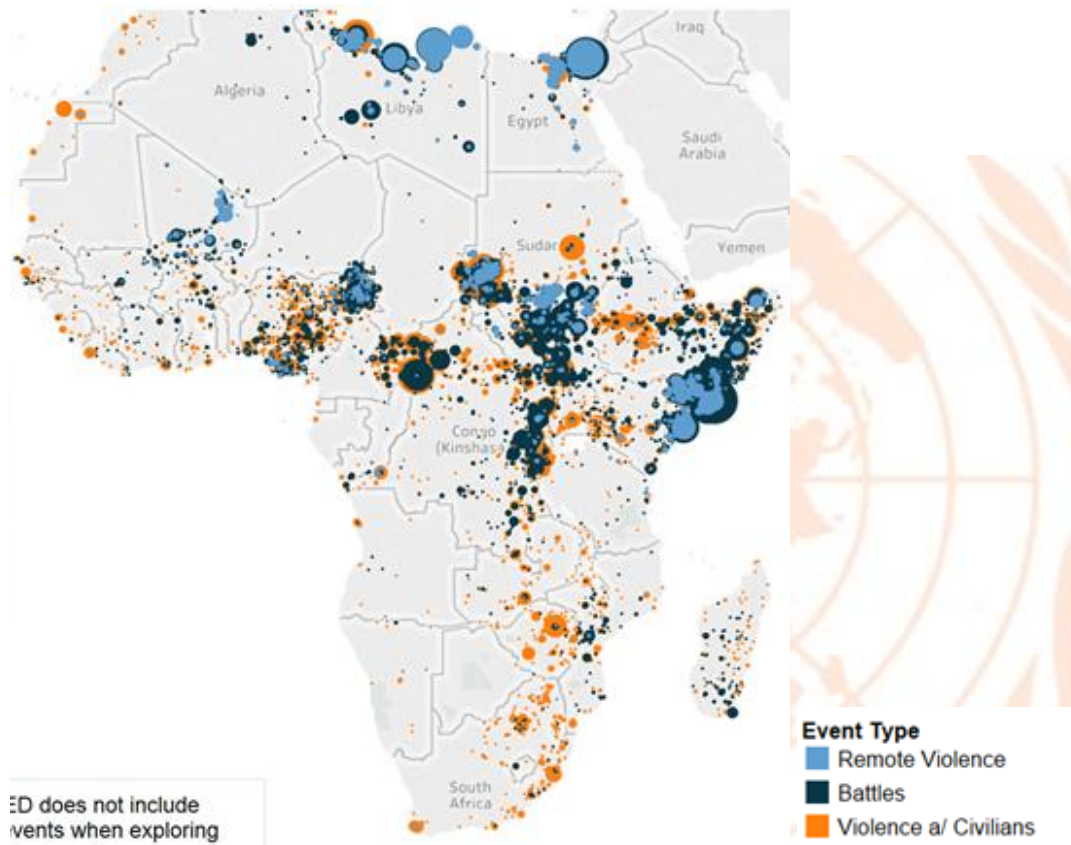
Countering violent extremism is still an inexperienced and underfunded movement in the Horn of Africa. [iv] To a better and more peaceful future in the region, comprehensive actions must be taken as soon as possible by the member states.

B) Current Issues

Political Conflicts By Agent Type (2014-2016)



Political Conflicts by Event Type (2014-2016)



1) Somalia

Somalia has been dealing with various problems in last decades. However, 2017 might be one of the toughest years they live through. Currently, there is a massive drought in the country that carries the risk to becoming a famine. The International community, regional organizations and the government are trying to battle this issue with humanitarian aids but unfortunately even doing humanitarian aids is not easy in Somalia. The biggest factor in this is al-Shabaab, the terrorist organization that Somalia and the African Union have been battling for years.

Al-Shabaab, Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen or "the Youth" is an Islamic radicalistic terrorist group that has been linked with al-Qaeda in the past. Its first emergence was the start of the 2000s when Islamic Courts Union (ICU) was established with the purpose of creating a fundamentalist Islamic government. ICU and al-Shabaab formed an alliance, and together they gained the control of Somalia's capital, Mogadishu, in 2006. They were banished from the city later by Ethiopia who invaded Somalia to regain the control of Mogadishu. The intervention of Ethiopia was at the request of Somalian government. However, some academicians say that the intervention that led to victory in that time was responsible for

"transforming the group from a small, relatively unimportant part of a more moderate Islamic movement into the most powerful and radical armed faction in the country".

The group still controls most of the southern and central Somalia. They are funded by the illegal trades they make, trade of charcoal being the most important. They have an estimated number of several thousand.

The existence of the group is also affecting the current drought and famine in the country. It is nearly impossible to send humanitarian aid to the territories that al-Shabaab controls. There are some cases that the group asked for money to let volunteers enter to the lands they hold.

2) Ethiopia

Ethiopia came into international community's attention in 2015, when large-scale protests against the current government started in the Oromia region. Following that, the Amhara region joined the protests in 2016. Security forces responded brutally to these mostly peaceful demonstrations, reportedly killing more than 500 people.[v]

The government declared a state of emergency in October 2016, effectively banning all kinds of protests and enabling arrest without court orders. [vi]

3) Sudan

The civil war started in 2003 or most commonly known, the war in Darfur is still ongoing. It has reportedly internally displaced two million people and killed more than 200.000.[vii] It began when Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) began attacking several government targets. These groups accuse the government of favouring Arabs and oppressing the minorities.

There is a joint African Union-United Nations mission in the country named UNAMID. There were various attempts to create a peace agreement involving both sides, but not all rebel groups agree on it. [viii]

In 2016, there were allegations that the government used chemical weapons on civilians in Darfur, killing around 250 people, mostly children.[ix]

4) Eritrea

In 2016, United Nations Inquiry in Eritrea released a report, saying that the Eritrean government committed crimes against humanity in a “widespread and systematic manner” including arbitrary arrest, enforced disappearance and torture. The commission says that the crimes were committed in detention centres and military training camps.[x]

Despite making multiple requests to the Government of Eritrea, the Commission was not allowed to visit the country for a presentation of its findings.[xi]

C) African Union Missions in the Region

AMISOM

African Union Mission to Somalia or AMISOM is the peacekeeping mission mandated by the Security Council of African Union and fully supported by the United Nations. Its mission is to stabilize the country. AMISOM forces have been successfully fighting al-Shabaab forces in the country. The current number of uniformed personnel AMISOM have in Somalia is around 22.000. [xii]

UNAMID

The African Union/UN hybrid operation in Darfur or UNAMID is the peacekeeping mission that takes place in Sudan. Its mandate is to “protect civilians, facilitate delivery of humanitarian assistance and mediate between the Government of Sudan and non-signatory armed movements on the basis of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD)”.[xiii]

D) African Standby Force (ASF)

African Standby Force is the continental peacekeeping mission of African Union. It is under the mandate of Peace and Security Council of African Union. It is a standby force aimed at having rapid deployment capabilities when the need arises.[xiv] Its functions include:

1. Observation and monitoring missions;
2. Other types of peace support operations;
3. Intervention in a member state in respect of grave circumstances or at the request of a member state to restore peace and security, in accordance with Article 4(h) and 4(J) of the AU Constitutive act;
4. Preventive deployment to prevent a dispute or a conflict from escalating, an ongoing violent conflict from spreading to neighbouring areas or states and the resurgence of violence after parties to conflict have reached an agreement;
5. Peace building, including post-conflict disarmament and demobilization;
6. Humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilian population in conflict areas and support efforts to address major natural disasters;
7. Any further functions as may be mandated by the PSC or the Assembly of Heads of State.[xv]

E) Conclusion

Horn of Africa or more specifically the Greater Horn of Africa is a very delicate region with various ethnicities and religions. Most of the states in the area have some internal conflict with some tensions rising between neighbouring countries from time to time. With the numbers of refugee and internally displaced people is increasing and the current drought that the region is going through a need for stability is of utmost importance.

F) Points that the resolution should cover

- How to create stability in the region?
- What should be done about the extremist/terrorist groups in the region?
- How can AU cut the financial backing these terrorist groups are having?
- Should peace talks between conflicting sides be arranged?
- If AU agrees on a mission, how it will be funded?
- What should AU do about the states that have been accused of crimes by the international community?

V) Agenda Item B: Preventing the recruitment of the child soldiers in paramilitary groups

A) Background

Child soldiers are defined as "children (individuals under the age of 18) who are used for any military purpose."^[xvi] There is not an exact age for child soldiers; it has known that it can range from age 4 to 17. Contrasting the common knowledge, not all child soldiers are boys - there is a considerable number of girl child soldiers, too. The task that is given to the children varies, not all of them deployed in actual fighting. It is true that some of the children actively participate in combating (and in killing too), but some have other tasks like being the cook, porter, servant, messenger, informant or spy. They also participate in any task that their "commander" wants them to do. It is known that the children are used for sexual purposes.^[xvii]

With growing numbers of the conflicts in the world, most specifically armed ones, the numbers of child soldiers recruited is on the rise too. These children join paramilitary groups either voluntarily or involuntarily. Some of them join voluntarily, sometimes for getting their family out of poverty or escaping from the discrimination they face in their communities. Others are usually abducted by paramilitary groups in their daily life.[xviii]

According to UNICEF, “When a conflict is prolonged, armed forces and groups are more likely to use children to replenish their ranks. This trend is facilitated by the availability of light, inexpensive small arms and light weapons that can be easily handled by children aged 10 and younger.”[xix]

In Africa, the use of child soldiers in the conflicts by paramilitary groups is quite common. The latest numbers show that there are around 120.000 child soldiers who are currently on "duty". This number represents the %40 of the world's child soldier population.[xx]

B) Current Issues

1) Voluntary and compulsory/forced recruitment

a. Voluntary Recruitment

The reasons why a child leaves his/her known environment and then decides to join to paramilitary groups are classified as "push factors" and "pull factors." Some of the important push factors can be "grievances, repression and discrimination as well as poverty, lack of education and employment, abuse at home or – due to the previous conflict – having no home or community at all anymore." Pull factors can be "seeking security in fighting forces, provision of food, a sense of belonging and ideology or group identity, as well as economic reasons such as gaining profit." [xxi]

It is known that some paramilitary groups both glorifies the military life and does promise some payment whether it is financial or not. The promise of a rank, alcohol and drugs, money or other motivational rewards are used to lure children into this groups. It is imperative to

realize that not all children join paramilitary groups at gunpoint. Their socio-economical background and culture play a significant role. [xxii]

Also, another major recruitment place for paramilitary groups is the refugee and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps. International laws somehow protect refugee camps from participation in the military activity. However, the same cannot be said for IDP camps. The national governments are responsible for IDP's although not having a government that protects them is actually why IDP's flee their homes. In the end, IDP camps become a recruitment hub for various groups.[xxiii]

According to Lisher, there are two main patterns of child recruitment in refugee and IDP camps called militarization and insecurity path.[xxiv]

b. Forced recruitment

The most common forced recruitment type is the abduction of children. There are two main types of forced recruitment. Either they are "abducted, or conscripted through coercion or severe threats or they are "abducted, or conscripted through coercion or severe threats, " or they are "born into forces or groups".[xxv]

Although most of the families try to protect their children from this kind of abduction, some of them happen in children's daily life, for example when they are walking back home from school. Also in the case of a parental resistance to the abduction, paramilitary groups are known to commit murder to abduct the children. [xxvi]

As an example, Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is known for their abduction of children to use them as soldiers. The reports state that around 25.000 children were abducted by LRA since the 80's.[xxvii]

2) Sexual abuse

Sexual abuse of children is defined as "any sexual act, or attempt at a sexual act, with a child, including through force, trickery or pressure of any form". Unfortunately, sexual abuse is widespread within paramilitary groups. High ranking members can exploit the younger,

lower ranking ones and the children cannot do anything about it. Most commonly it is girl child soldiers who are sexually abused however boys are also affected. The impacts of the sexual abuse are very dire on the children. They suffer both mental and physical issues afterward.[xxviii]

These children in armed conflicts do not have any familial support they can rely on. Also, it is not possible to have the backing of the paramilitary groups too. They are vulnerable and with nowhere to turn to. Sexual abuse in paramilitary groups can include "harassment, rape, forced marriage and sexual slavery".[xxix]

3) Detainment

Child soldiers that have been a part of a paramilitary group, voluntarily or involuntarily, when they get captured, get interrogated for gathering information on the groups for a long time. Some states arrest children because they are members of this illegal groups. Also, some of the children who escape the armed forces of the countries get arrested as deserters too when they are captured.[xxx]

Most of this arrest is made by the other side of the conflict that their organization belongs in. Thus, the children are at risk of being tortured, sexually abused or ill-treated for information gathering purposes.

Convention on the Rights of the Child states that “children can only be detained lawfully, as a last resort and for the shortest period of time”.

4) Reintegration

Reintegration is “the process through which children formerly associated with armed forces/groups are supported to return to civilian life and play a valued role in their families and communities.”[xxxi]

Reintegration is a fundamental issue for states to tackle. Most of the children who left or escaped paramilitary groups, if not reintegrated properly, re-join some paramilitary group again. Girls are considered impure and get stigmatized by their communities for their previous associations with paramilitary groups.[xxxii]

Familial and communal acceptance is the first and foremost step in the reintegration of child soldiers. For this, there is a need for the participation of these children in community activities. They need to have an active social role within their community which will enhance both their well-being and recovery. There is a need for funding this reintegration programs all over Africa. Otherwise, even if the children are saved, the governments can be at the point where they started.[xxxiii]

C) International agreements/committees on topic

1) Convention on the Rights of the Child

Convention on the Rights of the Child was passed by United Nations in 1989. Some of the relevant articles regarding the topic can be seen below.

Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, a child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.

Article 6

1. States Parties recognize that every child has the inherent right to life.
2. States Parties shall ensure to the maximum extent possible the survival and development of the child.

Article 20

1. A child temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment, or in whose own best interests cannot be allowed to remain in that environment, shall be entitled to special protection and assistance provided by the State.

States Parties undertake to protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. For these purposes, States Parties shall in particular take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent:

- (a) The inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity;
- (b) The exploitative use of children in prostitution or other unlawful sexual practices;
- (c) The exploitative use of children in pornographic performances and materials.

Article 35

States Parties shall take all appropriate national, bilateral and multilateral measures to prevent the abduction of, the sale of or traffic in children for any purpose or in any form.

Article 36

States Parties shall protect the child against all other forms of exploitation prejudicial to any aspects of the child's welfare.

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without

possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age;

(b) No child shall be deprived of his or her liberty unlawfully or arbitrarily. The arrest, detention or imprisonment of a child shall be in conformity with the law and shall be used only as a measure of last resort and for the shortest appropriate period of time;

(c) Every child deprived of liberty shall be treated with humanity and respect for the inherent dignity of the human person, and in a manner which takes into account the needs of persons of his or her age. In particular, every child deprived of liberty shall be separated from adults unless it is considered in the child's best interest not to do so and shall have the right to maintain contact with his or her family through correspondence and visits, save in exceptional circumstances;

(d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance, as well as the right to challenge the legality of the deprivation of his or her liberty before a court or other competent, independent and impartial authority, and to a prompt decision on any such action.

Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.

2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

3. States Parties shall refrain from recruiting any person who has not attained the age of fifteen years into their armed forces. In recruiting among those persons who have attained the age of fifteen years but who have not attained the age of eighteen years, States Parties shall endeavour to give priority to those who are oldest.

4. In accordance with their obligations under international humanitarian law to protect the civilian population in armed conflicts, States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure protection and care of children who are affected by an armed conflict.

Article 39

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.[xxxiv]

2) Rome Statute

Article 8

2. For the purpose of this Statute, "war crimes" means:

(b) Other serious violations of the laws and customs applicable in international armed conflict, within the established framework of international law, namely, any of the following acts:

(xxvi) Conscription or enlisting children under the age of fifteen years into the national armed forces or using them to participate actively in hostilities.[xxxv]

D) Country Studies

In 2015, Secretary-General of United Nations released a report on children in armed conflict. It listed 59 parties (paramilitary groups, illegal organizations, states) in the world. 27 of them belonged to 7 seven African countries below.

1. Central African Republic

The civil war in Central African Republic has been continuing for years. During the conflict, there have been reports that both sides -anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka- recruit child soldiers.[xxxvi] Also, the Lord's Resistance Army which is active in Central African Republic is known for their child soldiers. The exact number is not known, since accessing the information and monitoring is very limited in the country. However, United Nations estimated that it was around 6,000 in 2014.

2. Democratic Republic of Congo

In the ongoing conflict in Congo, nearly all groups use and recruit child soldiers. Other than the current groups in the conflict, the Lord's Resistance Army does recruit and use children in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is tough to know the exact numbers, but the officials are suspecting they are considerably higher from the reported cases. The Democratic Republic of Congo, by UN, had committed to action plans to end child recruitment. [xxxvii]

Thomas Lubanga Dyilo was sentenced 14 years of child recruitment and use of child soldiers by International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2014. He was a former commander-in-chief of the Forces patriotiques pour la libération du Congo (FPLC). This marks the first case of a conviction by ICC on the topic of child soldiers.[xxxviii]

3. Mali

The conflict in Mali or more specifically in Northern Mali has been going on for several years. Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad (MNLA), Haut Conseil pour l'unité de l'Azawad (HCUA), Mouvement arabe de l'Azawad (MAA)-Sidati, MAA-Ould Sidi Mohamed and Groupe d'autodéfense Touaregs Imghad et alliés (GATIA) all reportedly used and recruited child soldiers.[xxxix] Since verifying and monitoring information is very restricted in this state too due to the ongoing conflict, UN estimates the numbers are underreported.

4. Nigeria

Boko Haram, a militant Islamist group that aims to overthrow the government of Nigeria and creates an Islamic state through bombings, assassinations and abductions is known for their use of child soldiers.[xl] Their usage and kidnapping of children first came to the notice of international community when 300 girls were kidnapped from their school dormitory in 2014.[xli]

It is known that the group has abducted thousands of children, both boys and girls, to use them in their fight. Some of the girls are forced to marry or have sexual intercourse with the soldiers or bear a child.[xlii] Most of them taught to how to use a gun and kill people. Reportedly, Boko Haram uses children as young as 7 for suicide bombings.[xliii]

5. Somalia

In Somalia, the extremist group Al-Shabaab is mainly the recruiter of the child soldiers. They are known to have campaigns in mosques or schools to recruit. There are reported cases that they have been successful recruiting children in religious events.[xliv] A total of 5933 boys and 230 girls were recruited as child soldiers between April 1, 2010, and July 1, 2016.[xlv]

African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) is taking preventions for the recruitment of child soldiers.[xlvi] Also, the government of Somalia has committed to action plans to end the recruitment of the child soldiers.[xlvii]

6. South Sudan

The conflict in South Sudan has been going on strongly for the last four years. During the conflict, there have been reports that children were used as soldiers. According to the report of the Secretary-General of UN in 2015, the majority of the child recruitments were associated with "Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Opposition (SPLA-IO), but also with the South Sudan National Police Service, the South Sudan Wildlife Service, the South Sudan Liberation Army (SSLA), the South Sudan Democratic Movement/Army-Cobra Faction (SSDM/A-CF), the White Army and armed groups allied to Gabriel Tanginye." [xlviii]

South Sudan has signed an action plan, in accordance with United Nations, to end the recruitment of the child soldiers.[xliv]

7. Sudan

In the conflict in Sudan between the government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement North (SPLM-N) the usage of child soldiers was noted. Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and (SPLM-N) reportedly recruited children from age 14 to 17. Exact numbers cannot be gathered since entrance of both government, and SPLM-N controlled areas are very restricted.[1]

Sudan did not commit any kind of action plan to end the recruitment of the child soldiers.

E) Conclusion

As seen, child soldiers are an unfortunate trend that most of the African states are dealing with. Conflicts in the continent are creating the basis. Preventive measure towards ending both voluntary and involuntary recruitment should be taken. The African Union, although having some efforts in the past on the topic must find a way to incorporate the issue in their agendas and find a solution.

F) Points that a resolution should cover

- How to gather information on child soldiers?
- What type of preventive measurements should the African Union states take?
- What kind of programs should be implemented for reintegration of child soldiers?
- Should the African Union commit to ending child soldiers in the continent?
- How to maintain rehabilitation of the children?



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