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Reintegration of Child Soldiers Through
Peace Education in Sierra Leone: A
Potential Model for South Sudan?

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List of Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
CREPS	Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools
DDR	Demobilization, Demilitarization and Reintegration
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Group
ESP	Education Sector Plan
HDI	Human Development Index
HRW	Human Rights Watch
GPI	Global Peace Index
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MoEST	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council
OPAC	Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict
RSLMF	Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces
RUF	Revolutionary United Front
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
SPLM/A-IO	Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition
UNAMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USAID/OTI	United States Agency for International Development Office of Transition Initiatives
WHO	World Health Organization
YRTEP	Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace

1. Introduction

According to UNICEF, in 2016 nearly three-quarters of the global number of children living in countries affected by conflicts and/or emergencies lived in sub-Saharan African region (UNICEF, 2016). The post-Cold War period has been characterized by a rapid rise in intrastate conflicts, namely civil wars, and numerous sub-Saharan African countries have suffered from violent warfare after the post-independence wars period (see annex 1) (Pettersson & Eck, 2018). This rise in armed conflicts has revealed that at the beginning of the present century, children served in 40% of the world's armed forces, rebel groups, and terrorist organizations and fought in almost 75% of global conflicts (Singer, 2006). Indeed, it might seem revolting to discover that Antarctica is the only continent where children have not served as soldiers.

The UN Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC), which entered into force in 2002, sets the age of voluntary recruitment at 18 years and obliges non-state armed groups not to recruit or make use of children under this age. At the present time, 168 States have ratified the OPAC, 12 States have signed but not ratified and 17 States have neither signed nor ratified the protocol¹. (United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, 2019). However, multiple child recruitment instances prior (and following) the establishment of the OPAC have been documented by regional and international organizations, such as the UN Secretary General 2017 annual report, which unveiled increasing cases of child recruitment in Syria, Somalia, Central African Republic, South Sudan and Nigeria (Child Soldiers International, 2019).

This paper will compare and focus on the consequences of conflicts of two countries in the sub-Saharan African region, Sierra Leone and South Sudan. Although these States might seem considerably different, they have undergone parallel situations regarding a specific population sector: children. A high number of youngsters in these two countries have been taking part in armed warfare, joining armed groups either forcibly or “voluntarily” to escape physical and socioeconomic consequences that affect them and their closest relations.

¹ **States that have signed but not ratified the OPAC:** Fiji, Gambia, Haiti, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lebanon, Liberia, Myanmar, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Somalia, Suriname and Zambia.

States that have taken no action: Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Comoros, Cook Islands, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Equatorial Guinea, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Sao Tome and Principe, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tuvalu, United Arab Emirates (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2019).

A holistic approach to the reintegration of these children is peace education. As a result of the concerns stemming from modern warfare, nuclear weapons and international security, peace research originated in the 20th century. Johan Galtung introduced in the 1960s his well-known dichotomy between positive and negative peace, along with his classification of violence in direct, cultural and structural violence. Other representative figures at this time were Maria Montessori, Elise Boulding and Ian M. Harris, and their theories and approaches to peace and peace education will be examined throughout the whole paper for the purpose of understanding the relevance of peace in the reintegration of child soldiers.

1.1 Aim and motivation

The leading motivation behind this research paper's theme was the book *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* written by Ishmael Beah. Beah depicts in an explicit and concise way his experience as a child soldier during a period of five years in the Sierra Leonean Revolutionary Unity Front (RUF). Prior to reading this book in 2013, we did not know the collateral damage to children that armed conflicts could entail, and our interest towards child soldiers and their reintegration to society rapidly grew. Five years later, in February 2018, news on the partial release of child soldiers in South Sudan were published and we instantly remembered the book and questioned if the Sierra Leonean initiatives and models of reintegration of child soldiers would work in the long run in a country like South Sudan that was widely unknown to us until the present time. After reflecting on the issue and possible focal points, we started researching on peace education and its capacity to engage children, institutions and communities for the purpose of establishing a long-lasting peace.

Sierra Leone is often presented as one of the countries where international peacekeeping operations coupled with national initiatives have succeeded in demobilizing and reintegrating child soldiers into society. This country emerged from a civil war in the year 2002, and numerous programs of different nature (political, economic, social, medical, educational or cultural) have been implemented for the purpose of reintegrating these children into their communities again. South Sudan, on the contrary, has undergone a civil conflict two years after its independence in 2011, and both parts are believed to have children in their front lines. Taking into consideration that every country in sub-Saharan Africa is vastly different, this paper attempts to hypothesize about

the implementation of the Sierra Leonean reintegration peace education programs for child fighters in other conflicted countries, in this case in South Sudan.

The focus on peace education is not fortuitous. Undoubtedly, education and training are vital steps for the reintegration of children in a post-conflict society, due to the development of knowledge and skills for their future independence, among other reasons. In this sense, peace education is a long-term process that consists in developing the necessary coping mechanisms, reasoning and tools in order to support individual and collective behavioral change to return to normality after conflict or trauma. Therefore, this type of education is a crucial element for the complete reintegration of children in societies that are prone to conflict, such as the South Sudanese society.

1.2 Theoretical background and literature review

This section will be further divided into three parts. Firstly, it will provide an introduction to Sierra Leone and South Sudan's geopolitical and socioeconomic demographical background and indexes relevant to the purpose of the paper. It will go on to describe both countries' conflicts; **a profile and timeline of both countries' conflicts is provided in the annex section**, for the purpose of giving a general and concise overview. Secondly, this section will develop a conceptual framework encompassing the essential terms that will appear throughout this paper. Lastly, it will examine the main researchers and theories in the fields of child soldiers and peace education that have been paramount in the analysis of the paper's issue.

1.2.1 Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a country located in West Africa, bordering the North Atlantic Ocean, between Guinea and Liberia. The country's capital and largest city is Freetown, an important port in the region. In 2018, the country had a population of around 7.6 million (United Nations Development Programme, 2019), divided into multiple ethnic groups. The largest of these groups are the Mende and Temne, which occupy the southeastern and northern parts of the country, respectively. Around a third of the population live in the capital and other urban areas, while the rest live in rural areas (Alghali, Turay, Johnson, & Kandeh, 2005). Sierra Leone's official language is English, but the population speaks other vernacular languages depending on the country's region and ethnic group. Islam (78.6 %) and Christianity (20.8%) are the predominant religions (Central Intelligence

Agency, 2019). The country is resource-rich in minerals (diamonds, gold and iron ore for instance), which account for high rates of national exports and economic growth, agriculture and fisheries. However, the country suffered an economic contraction after the Ebola outbreak of 2014 and 2015, which, combined with falling global commodities prices, contributed to an economic recession. Since the increase in mineral exports in 2017 and the end of the Ebola epidemic, the country's economy has resumed its growth. Nevertheless, Sierra Leone is still vastly dependent on commodities prices, due to the lack of sources diversification, adequate infrastructure and institutional corruption (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019).

A number of Human Development indicators relevant to this paper are life expectancy at birth, which was of 52.2 years old in 2018, and the expected years of schooling, which were 9.8 (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). This information will be crucial when analyzing peace education programs in this country. Further fundamental indexes are the Human Development Index (HDI) and the Global Peace Index (GPI). On the one hand, the HDI is a measure of average achievement in three key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living (United Nations Development Programme, 2018). Sierra Leone ranks number 184 (out of 189) with a 0.419 (world average is 0.728). On the other hand, the GPI covers 99.7% of the world's population and measures the state of peace of 163 countries using three thematic domains: the level of *Societal Safety and Security*; the extent of *Ongoing Domestic and International Conflict*; and the degree of *Militarization* (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018). According to this index, Sierra Leone ranks number 35 out of 163 (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018). These indicators convey that although the country's situation is not conflictive overall, human development must still be achieved.

1.2.2 Sierra Leone's conflict background

The case of Sierra Leone's conflict cannot be labelled as ethnic, religious or ideological, but as a result of socio-economic and political circumstances, namely the country's dependence on mineral rents, the IMF and World Bank structural adjustment program's pressure, interference from neighboring countries and a corrupt and repressive Government, among other factors (Kaldor & Vincent, 2006). Sierra Leone's Civil War lasted eleven years (1991-2002) and was characterized by the numerous groups—rebels,

guerrillas or Government-backed forces—that took part in the conflict, and in most cases made use of children in their frontlines.

In 1991, the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) of Sierra Leone—a rebel group founded by ex-Liberian president Charles Taylor and activist Foday Sankoh—began carrying out attacks on the country from Liberia. From the very start, the RUF was notorious for its terror tactics against civilians and “Small Boys Unit”² made up of child soldiers (Residual Special Court for Sierra Leone, 2006). In 1992, a group of young soldiers that formed the Republic of Sierra Leone Military Forces (RSLMF), launched a military coup that ousted president Momoh, as a result of its failure to fight against the RUF. The RSLMF established the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC), which ruled from 1992 until 1996 and proved to be as ineffective as the former Government in combatting the RUF, given that an increasing part of the country fell to RUF fighters (Global Security, 2017). By 1995, the rebels held much of the countryside and controlled various diamondiferous areas that helped finance their military campaign. In 1996 elections were held and Ahmad Tejan Kabbah—a former UN employee—was elected president. Later that year there was an attempt to end the conflict with the Abidjan Peace Agreement, which established a ceasefire and granted amnesty to RUF members. This document also requested the Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) of armed combatants and transformation of the RUF into a political organization, among other elements. However, the agreement failed due to the lack of will to implement it by both sides. Instead, the RUF put effort into transforming into a legitimate political party, by asking for other African countries’ support (Rashid, 2004).

In 1997, a group of soldiers who called themselves the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrew President Kabbah’s Government and later invited the RUF to join their military junta. Nevertheless, in 1998, after 10 months of the AFRC junta in office, the Nigerian-led Economic Community of West African States’ Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) forces reinstated the Government of President Kabbah (Global Security, 2017). Subsequently, the United Nations agreed to send peacekeepers to help restore order and disarm the rebels. However, in 1999, the RUF attempted to overthrow the Government and brought the fighting to the capital, Freetown, leaving thousands of dead and wounded civilians. As a response, ECOMOG forces attacked the rebels and pushed back their militias from the capital. With the assistance of the

² A group of children forcibly recruited by the RUF, known for their cruelty and attacks on civilians.

international community, President Kabbah and RUF leader Sankoh signed the Lomé Peace Agreement. This accord was characterized by its political concessions to the rebels (it made the RUF leader Vice President and gave other members Government positions). It also demanded international peacekeeping forces by both ECOMOG and the United Nations, and subsequently, the UN Security Council established a peacekeeping mission (UNAMSIL). Alongside this amnesty, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Sierra Leone was created (International Peace Institute, 2013).

When armed conflict seemed to have ceased and ECOMOG forces left the country, the RUF violated the agreement by holding UNAMSIL personnel as hostages and taking up arms in the year 2000. After an attack to 20 people in Freetown, Sankoh and other senior members of the RUF were arrested and the group was stripped of its positions in Government. In 2001, the RUF and Government-backed forces signed the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement to end hostilities and reopen the DDR process across the country. In early 2002, the war was declared over and President Kabbah was re-elected, with the RUF failing to win any Government position (Global Security, 2017). President Kabbah requested UN assistance in bringing RUF fighters to justice and the Special Court for Sierra Leone was established, which relegated the previously created Truth and Reconciliation Commission to second-class status (International Peace Institute, 2013). Ultimately, in 2002, Sierra Leone ratified the UN Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict three months after its entry into force (United Nations Treaty Collection, 2019).

The Sierra Leonean Civil War was characterized by the brutality of the atrocities committed to civilians, including the violent abduction of children, widespread amputations and systematic rape. These wounds have still not healed in parts of the country's society and particularly among former child ex-combatants, as missionary Chema Caballero has argued in previous country visits and interviews.

Child soldiers were manipulated to believe that their new families were the guerrilla groups under which they fought. They made them believe that bullets would not kill them, and they would be obliged to kill a member of their family or community in order to survive and be part of the group. These youngsters are not children anymore, they are killing machines. (Caballero, 2005)

1.2.3 South Sudan

(The Republic of) South Sudan is a country located in East-central Africa that shares borders with Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Democratic Republic of Congo, Central African Republic and Uganda. The country's capital and largest city is Juba, an important port in the West African region. In 2018, the country had a population of around 12.6 million (United Nations Development Programme, 2019), and it is known to be one of the most diverse countries in the whole African region, with more than 60 ethnic groups. The predominant ethnicities are the Dinka, the Nuer, the Shilluk, the Azande, the Bari and the Kakwa among many others (Central Intelligence Agency, 2019).

South Sudan's official language is English, and the population speaks one of the regional languages (Juba Arabic in Juba and indigenous languages corresponding to the existent ethnic groups). Concerning religion, the South Sudanese population is mostly Christian, but they also believe in animism. The country is resource-rich in oil, hydropower, fertile agricultural land (80% of the country's population lives in rural areas), gold, diamonds and petroleum among other resources. Nevertheless, the country's socioeconomic situation ranks among the lowest in the world, with recurring poverty, famine and tensions with the Republic of Sudan on the shared power over oil revenues.

Numbers might reflect the extent to which the conflict has affected the youngest country in the world. In 2018, life expectancy at birth was of 57.3 years old, and the expected years of schooling were of 4.9 on average (United Nations Development Programme, 2019). These concerning results stem from the lack or shortage of health care facilities, schools, medical and teaching supplies and health workers and teachers, among many other reasons. Consequently, regarding the HDI and GPI indicators, South Sudan ranks the third to last (187) and number 161 out of 163 respectively (Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018).

1.2.4 South Sudan's conflict background

In 2005, after more than twenty years of civil war in Sudan between the Government in the Muslim, Arabic-speaking north and rebels from the predominantly Christian south, a peace agreement was signed between the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and the Government of President Omar al-Bashir. This decision was backed by African countries within the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the United States, the United Kingdom, Norway and Italy

(Williams, 2017). Moreover, the agreement introduced the possibility for Sudan to be split into two countries after a referendum, which took place in January 2011, with nearly 99% of South Sudanese citizens voting in favor of independence. In July, the Republic of South Sudan was formally established and became the youngest country in the world, becoming in addition the newest member of the United Nations and the African Union (Williams, 2017).

Although the South Sudanese population and the international community viewed independence as a way to bring peace, freedom and prosperity, these expectations were undermined due to the following factors: on the one hand, the continuous ethnic tensions between the two largest ethnic groups in the country (the Dinka and the Nuer), and on the other hand, the system for sharing power and resources (particularly oil) with Sudan. At the beginning, President Salva Kiir, who belongs to the Dinka group, appointed Riek Machar, a Nuer, as his Vice-President for the purpose of trying to prevent conflict along ethnic lines and build a unity Government. However, in early 2013, Machar announced his intentions to challenge Kiir for the presidency in 2015, and Kiir accused him for organizing a coup d'état. At the end of that year, violent conflict broke out and the two main warring parties were constituted as the Government and its allies (SPLM/A and other factions) on one side, and the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLMA-IO) loyal to Machar on the other (Williams, 2017). In 2013 in Juba, the Government had recruited around 16,000 children to serve as soldiers, cooks and cleaners (UNICEF, 2015).

Despite the signing of a power sharing agreement in August 2015, armed conflict resumed in 2016, expanding towards states that had been peaceful after independence, Equatoria and Western Bahr el Ghazal. The peace agreement also called for the end of all violations against children, the immediate release of children that had been recruited by all parties and the screening of troops, but only less than 2,000 children were released and reunified with their families and communities. Both Government and opposition groups have failed to make tangible progress to protect children from conflict (UNICEF, 2016). The spread of the civil war across the country restricted the Government's capacity to monopolize the use of force (Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index, 2018). In August 2018, President Kiir signed a power-sharing agreement with Machar and other opposition groups for the purpose of ending the conflict. This deal introduces a final peace accord, which would lead to a transitional Government of shared power among the

Government and the numerous opposition groups (a slight change from the 2015 accord) (Boswell, 2018). This Government would expand to include five vice presidents, with Machar as the first. Kiir retains two vice presidents, while other opposition groups fill the other two slots. This deal is supported by neighboring countries, due to evident stability reasons and to oil import reasons in the case of Sudan (Boswell, 2018).

Currently, the South Sudanese population is waiting to witness an actual peaceful period apart from the “signing of a paper” that has failed in previous occasions. The humanitarian aspect of this war has been one of the most worrying situations in the international arena so far. The death toll in April 2018 was of nearly 400,000 since December 2013 (Health in Humanitarian Crises Centre, 2018); both sides of the conflict have made use of child soldiers, approximately a total of 19,000 from which more than 2,300 have been killed or injured. Moreover, half of the country’s population is food insecure, almost two million are internally displaced and more than two million have fled to neighboring countries (Child Soldiers International, 2018).

Although South Sudan ratified the UN Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict (OPAC) in September 2018, local, national and international efforts must be aligned, and leave time for progress to be made in order to transition from the present situation as one of the poorest and most insecure countries in the world.

1.2.5 Conceptual framework

When analyzing specific elements of Sierra Leone’s and South Sudan’s conflicts and reintegration of child soldiers, it is essential to be familiarized with a number of concepts in the field of peace and conflict studies. The definitions that will follow are listed using the deductive method of general-to-specific relevance.

a) Peacekeeping

Peacekeeping originated more than fifty years ago within the UN as a primary military model of supporting ceasefires and peace agreements after interstate wars, it has shifted to a complex model that incorporates military and civilian actions undertaken in the aftermath of a civil conflict to consolidate peace and prevent further fighting (Durch, Holt, Earle, & Shanahan, 2003). Ultimately, peacekeeping is a multidimensional process that includes electoral monitoring, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration

(DDR) or transitional administration of a country. Peacekeeping works on the basis of consent of the parties, impartiality and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2019).

In Sierra Leone, UNAMSIL worked for 6 years (1999-2005) cooperating with the Sierra Leonean Government and assisting in the implementation of DDR plans. In the case of South Sudan, the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) was established in 2011 after the country's independence and it has been subsequently reinforced in 2013 and 2014 for the purpose of delivering humanitarian assistance and implementing the 2015 Cessation of Hostilities Agreement. In 2018 there were currently around 19,300 UN personnel deployed in the country (see annex 4.d) (United Nations Peacekeeping, 2019).

b) Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR)

DDR stands for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration. It is a highly recognized and multidimensional post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding process (United Nations, 2006). This UN-led initiative was created in 1990 and it lays the foundations for supporting communities and individuals who return to them, while developing a common ground for long-term peace and security. DDR activities are essential elements of both the initial stabilization of broken societies as well as their long-term development. DDR must be integrated into the entire peace process, from the peacekeeping operations up till the peacebuilding initiatives (United Nations, 2019).

In May 2005, the UN Secretary General (United Nations General Assembly, 2006) defined each of the concepts that comprise DDR in a note on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peacekeeping operations:

Disarmament is the collection, documentation, control and disposal of small arms, ammunition, explosives and light and heavy weapons from combatants and often from the civilian population (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

Demobilization is the formal and controlled discharge of active combatants from armed forces and groups, including a phase of “reinsertion” which provides short-term assistance to ex-combatants (United Nations General Assembly, 2006). *Reinsertion* is a form of transitional assistance offered to ex-combatants that takes place during demobilization but prior to the longer-term process of reintegration. Its main objective is

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 (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

Reintegration is the long-term process by which ex-combatants acquire civilian status and gain sustainable employment and income. It is a political, social and economic process with an open time-frame, primarily taking place in communities at the local level (United Nations General Assembly, 2006).

c) Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is included in the last stage of DDR, extended towards the last step of conflict resolution and after peacekeeping forces leave the country. Thus, it is characterized by its long-term nature. A comprehensive definition of this concept was provided in 2007 by the Secretary-General's Policy Committee, who stated that:

[Peacebuilding encompasses] “a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Peacebuilding strategies must be coherent and tailored to the specific needs of the country concerned, based on national ownership, and should comprise a carefully prioritized, sequenced, and relatively narrow set of activities aimed at achieving the above objectives.” (United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, 2007).

The key elements that should be drawn from this definition are the strengthening of national capacities, sustainable peace and the need for coherence and specific tailor-made measures depending on the country.

d) Peace education

In this paper, peace education is considered to be implemented under the umbrella of peacebuilding. Peace education is a broad concept that encompasses numerous elements of the culture of peace and education. There is no universally accepted definition of peace education, and therefore this paper will define the term based on Ian Harris' theory and UNESCO's definition. Ultimately, peace education is a process that aims at **preventing, building and preserving peace and teaching the effects of conflict and/or violence** through knowledge, skills, activities, pedagogy and cooperation, which will eventually lead to **behavioral changes** in a group of people. This process has both short

and long-term goals and varies depending on the nature of the addressed conflict (war, ethnic violence, collective physical violence etc.) (Harris I. M., 1996). Ultimately, the five main postulates of peace education are:

- “1. it explains the roots of violence;
2. it teaches alternatives to violence;
3. it adjusts to cover different forms of violence;
4. peace itself is a process that varies according to context;
5. conflict is omnipresent.” (Harris I. M.2004)

e) Child soldier

Multiple definitions of the concept “child soldier” have been presented throughout the years within conventions and protocols in international law. Nonetheless, the most comprehensive definition was provided in 2007. In this year, the French Government and the UNICEF hosted a conference on children in armed conflict and reached the Paris Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated with Armed Forces or Armed Groups. This agreement defined children associated with a Government force or armed group as “any person below 18 years of age 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” (UNICEF, 2007). This is the definition that will be taken into consideration throughout the paper, given its comprehensive nature of the recruiters and tasks children are obliged to undertake.

1.2.6 Literature review on child soldiers

Although the selected peace education approach for this paper is substantially specific, a broader focus on child soldiers and their reintegration is crucial in order to introduce and understand the ways and environment in which peace education might be implemented. Child recruitment in conflicts was placed under the scope of attention at the end of the 20th century when the world witnessed the use of children in wars in Uganda, Cambodia, Liberia, the Philippines, Afghanistan and ultimately in Sierra Leone. The following authors and works of research have helped to draw a background on the issue and will be cited throughout the paper.

First of all, **Peter W. Singer** served as an advisor on the issue of child soldiers for the US Marine Corps and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). He has written numerous articles on the issue of child soldiers and is the author of the book *Children at War*, where he provides comprehensive information about the causes, experiences, consequences, reintegration and even prevention of the use of child soldiers in armed conflict (Breazeale, 2009). His account and insights on the evolution of the use of child soldiers will be cited in this paper.

Secondly, in order to examine and evaluate the details and reasons why children are recruited as fighters or “voluntarily” join armed forces, as well as the extent to which their experiences affect the reintegration process, the book *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight* written by **Rachel Brett and Irma Specht** in 2004 will serve as a fundamental basis. Brett has been the Human Rights representative at the Quaker UN Office since 1993. She has published articles and book chapters on human rights, the role of non-governmental organizations and child soldiers (University of Kent, 2012). Specht is an anthropologist with expertise in the field of the reintegration of ex-combatants and child soldiers. She has published books on the experiences of girl combatants in Liberia and is currently the Director of Transition International, an international consultancy firm based in the Netherlands (Conciliation Resources, 2019).

Lastly, when focusing on the reintegration of children who have fought in armed conflict, **Jeannie Annan**, Senior Director of Research and Evaluation for the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Visiting Scientist at the Harvard School of Public Health (Annan J. , 2016) draws a framework with four main factors that are crucial in the reintegration process of child soldiers into their communities. She argues that social acceptance, hostility, economical livelihood and psychological wellbeing must be taken into consideration in this process (Annan, Blattman , Mazurana, & Carlson, 2011). However, in this paper, Annan’s categories will be simplified into three main factors: social acceptance and hostility, economic livelihood and the important role of education, and psychological wellbeing.

1.2.7 Literature review on peace education

While DDR and peacebuilding have been mainly developed by and/or originated within the United Nations framework, peace education has been theorized by multiple academics and peace researchers since the 19th century until the present time. An

apparently simple but upright reason for this field of study lays on the continuous violence and conflicts that humanity has suffered, and the need to develop theories and initiatives to explain, prevent and solve these situations. Given the analytical nature of this paperwork, the following authors and their works will be mentioned, due to the relevance of their studies and ideas for the reintegration of child soldiers or peace education implementation in conflict-torn societies.

Firstly, **Maria Montessori** developed theories, and more importantly a pedagogy on education for peace. Montessori is an acclaimed scholar for her child-led education approach, and although she has received multiple critiques for her approach being “naïve”, she theorized about peace education even before the United Nations did (Duckworth, 2008). Her methods of discipline and classroom management have contributed to shape peace education programs globally (Harris I. , 1993). Montessori’s methods of discipline and classroom management must reinforce “positive peace” and its presence of human values such as justice, harmony, freedom, and equality (Duckworth, 2008). Her methodology will be key to assessing peace education models.

Secondly, another woman who enhanced the field of peace studies and peace education was **Elise Boulding**, widely labelled as “the matriarch of peace studies”. Boulding was a sociologist who studied the quality of peace cultures. She claimed that horizontal relationships that can strike a balance between the need for “autonomy” and the need for “bonding” can foster peace. Therefore, by developing individual and social capacity for such balancing (peace education being a valuable mechanism for that purpose), a culture of peace can be built (Benson, 2010). Her theory will be included in the importance of involving the community in peace education programs.

Thirdly, it is fundamental to include **Johan Galtung** in any peace analysis work, as he is the precursor of the classification of the types of violence (structural, direct and cultural) in a conflict, as well as the well-known dichotomy between “negative peace” or the mere absence of violence and “positive peace”, which refers to the idea of humans actively constructing peace. Peace education could be included in his positive perception of peace as “the integration of human society”, rather than in a negative context of “the absence of violence” (Grewal, 2003).

Fourthly, much of the literature on peace education that will be used in this paper has been written by **Ian M. Harris**. Harris worked as a professor at the University of Wisconsin and later served as the executive secretary of the Peace Education Commission

of the International Peace Research Association until 2008 (International Peace Research Association Foundation, 2009). Harris not only develops the theoretical notions of “peace” and peace education, but also evaluates diverse ways to practice peace education in schools and communities as a way of connecting classroom learning with social action.

Finally, **Diane Bretherton** (Director of the International Conflict Resolution Centre at the University of Melbourne), **Jane Weston** (Senior Project Manager at the Curriculum Corporation) and **Vic Zbar** (Education Consultant and writer) are three Australian women that conducted a World Bank project in the immediate post-conflict situation in Sierra Leone, where they implemented a peace education toolkit (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2005). Their work will be cited and will serve to extract the essential elements of a peace education model in a post-conflict society.

1.3 Objectives and research questions

The main objective of this research paper is to theorize about peace education as a viable approach to reintegrate child ex-combatants into societies. In order to do so, it will analyze peace education theory, a number of key academics in this field as well as previous peace education toolkits for post-conflict societies, namely Sierra Leone. Additionally, it will examine the necessary conditions and reasons for peace education approaches to be successful, their potential outcomes and transposing possibilities.

Much of the existent literature describes the importance of a long-term recovery for child soldiers for the purpose of healing the trauma caused by armed conflict. Peace education has been determined as one of the possible approaches to the holistic reintegration of a child after living under recruitment. Consequently, the first question this paper will attempt to answer is why peace education is a highly effective and prudent tool to recover societies from a conflict. In addition, this paper aims to answer the reasons behind the recruitment of children in armed conflicts. Multiple factors previously explained by theorists in the field will be classified to provide a coherent proposition. The ultimate question the paper wants to address is the viability of transposing the essential elements of peace education toolkits in Sierra Leone to South Sudan after its recent record with child soldiers.

1.4 Methodology

The scope of this thesis will encompass qualitative research for the purpose of conducting a brief comparative case study. Therefore, this paper will specifically make use of secondary sources, due to the pre-established time frame and the impossibility of using a quantitative method with surveys and participants in the countries and circumstances it will analyze.

Through an in-depth research on the literature in the fields of child soldiers, ex-combatant reintegration programs and peace research, this paper will focus on the importance of peace education programs as a tool for the reintegration of young ex-combatants. Given the seriousness of the issue of child soldiers, a high number of **national and international organizations** and **non-profit organizations** have developed comprehensive research and literature on of child soldiers and DDR. Accordingly, sources such as the United Nations and its numerous agencies and programs, Human Rights Watch, Child Soldiers International and CARE represent some of the background. In this field, the paper will make mention of passages and information from two essential books for anyone aiming at understanding the narrative of child soldiers from a thorough and personal perspective: *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* written by Ishmael Beah, and *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight* written by Rachel Brett and Irma Specht. Considering that these books contain unedited account of the experiences of former child ex-combatants throughout the world, they will provide the paper with a personal touch.

International legal frameworks will serve as guidelines to highlight the vital elements that have a correlation with Human Rights violations and the countries' compliance with global governance with regards to the protection of children. Data and indexes will illustrate the paper's main analysis in order to observe the magnitude of the problem, its evolution throughout the years and the success or failure of different reintegration programs in both countries, especially in Sierra Leone, where most of them have already been carried out. The main data used in this paper will be retrieved in **databases** such as the World Bank, the UNDP and other institutes that have developed **indexes** like the Global Peace Index (GPI). **Interviews** with Chema Caballero, a Spanish missionary who lived in Sierra Leone during the war, will give first-hand insights of different approaches to the grim reality of the trauma that ex-combatants live.

Peace education theory has been rapidly gaining relevance since the end of the 20th century. Many **scholars** have studied its implementation in formal (schools, institutions and universities) and informal (families, local communities, religious institutions) environments in a number of sub-Saharan African countries. Interestingly, a high number of academics and researchers in the field of conflict and peace studies that this paper will mention are women: Maria Montessori, Elise Boulding, Jeanie Annan and Professor Diane Bretherton. A key element that will be highlighted throughout the whole paper is that peace education programs must be tailor-made, given that each country recovering from conflict and war does so under unique conditions. The question of how peace and security are achieved in a post-conflict society does not have a unified answer in academia, and therefore, numerous factors must be taken into consideration when outlining a peace education program depending on the country, the type of conflict, the individuals involved etc. In this sense, this paper will analyze two comprehensive **peace education programs** for the purpose of illustrating the detailed account of the objectives it outlined and challenges they encountered: on the one hand, the YRTEP program sponsored by USAIS, and on the other hand a World Bank peace education program that was completed in Sierra Leone by Diane Bretherton, Jane Weston and Vic Zbar in 2002.

Academic journal articles with a holistic approach to conflict, child soldiers, peace, reintegration and peace education have provided this research with the necessary analytic information in order to look at the whole picture of post-conflict societies' recovery and peace education's importance. In this case, authors such as Peter Singer and Michael Wessells, who have written articles on child soldiers and their reintegration, have provided this paper with the necessary background information to conduct the analysis and understand the recruitment of children in interstate conflicts, along with their reintegration into society.

2. Analysis

2.1 Recruitment of children in armed conflict

In order to examine the various reasons behind the recruitment of children by state and non-state actors in armed conflicts, it is necessary to acknowledge the differences between “voluntary” and forced recruitment of young children from two separate but intertwined perspectives: on the one hand, the child’s perspective, and on the other hand the recruiter’s rationale. In order to do so, one must take into consideration the particular social conditions a country is subjected to at times of armed conflict.

When war takes over in a country, every part of human life is altered, and a culture of violence is established as a normal everyday background. As Brett and Specht argue in *Young Soldiers: Why They Choose to Fight*, war in itself is a crucial factor that might explain children’s involvement in conflict, due to food and water shortages, family breakup, the closing of schools, and increased social tensions (Brett & Specht, 2004). Therefore, under these circumstances the theory of push and pull factors might illustrate the reasoning behind children’s willingness to join an armed group, as well as the comparative advantages they pose to recruiters. Within this theory, pull factors attract an individual to act in a certain way, in this case voluntarily join an armed group, while push factors repel an individual from continuing living under a specific situation, which in this case would be repelling a conflict’s socioeconomic consequences and choosing to fight instead. It is important to note that under warfare conditions, push and pull categories might occasionally overlap and be conclusive for both categories.

2.1.1 Children’s involvement in armed groups

On the one hand, this paper will analyze three key push factors that motivate youngsters to join an armed conflict:

a) Socioeconomic conditions

In the midst of an armed conflict, living conditions are undermined and poverty arises, despite being present beforehand in most cases. Young children might find themselves with no choice but that of joining an armed group for the purpose of sending the salary to their families (Njuguna, 2016). A Human Rights Watch report of child soldiers in South Sudan documented various examples of boys between 11 to 14 years of age that had joined the Government’s SPLA arguing that the income

they received could improve their families' economic conditions. One of the testimonies illustrates the children's perception of gaining an income in exchange for fighting:

It was my choice, I was not forced. ... I went with my friends, we were a big group, around 10 of us, they were my age mates. One month they gave me 600 SSP [South Sudanese Pounds], and then another time they brought us two months' salary, 1,200. I was able to buy sorghum for my family. [...] So many street children have joined, to get food. (Human Rights Watch, 2015)

b) Family environment

Children frequently live with their closest family members or depend on them prior to the start of a conflict. Therefore, relatives' separation, family disruption or the lack of a family present a key push factor that must be taken into account when discussing about children (Wessells, 2005). The vulnerability that stems from these circumstances drives children to find material and psychological safety in other places or people, in this case within armed groups.

c) Powerlessness and hopelessness

Witnessing a conflict that affects the only world children have lived in might be extremely distressing, resulting in feelings of powerlessness and hopelessness. In response, youngsters may resort to joining an armed group faction looking for a meaning in life and a feeling of belonging (Wessells, 2005).

On the other hand, two key pull factors that might represent incentives for children to join an armed group are the following:

a) Socioeconomic protection

This factor is twofold, as it has previously been considered as a push factor. The need for food, water, shelter safety, physical protection and economic compensation attract children to join an armed group. Initially, the rapid feeling of belonging to a group as a method of survival in the midst of a war may be extremely compelling for struggling youngsters. In many cases, children might want to join a family member that was recruited before, namely a sibling, a parent or an uncle or be in the same group as their former friends' group (Wessells, 2005).

b) Culture of violence and "heroic" views

Children, and particularly adolescents, might consider as "heroic" the fact of participating in armed conflict as a way to look older and, following the example

of older relatives, friends or community members (Njuguna, 2016). The fact of being confronted with war games, war movies and everyday violence creates an environmental predisposition to try it out when children are faced with the opportunity and they are given arms (Brett & Specht, 2004). In a number of sub-Saharan countries, namely in the case of present South Sudan or former Sierra Leone, the culture of violence is so prevalent that a child might not be consider unnatural owning a gun and making use of violence in order to resolve conflicts. Ishmael Beah, author of *A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier* explains the feeling of fearlessness and security that a gun brought him.

I stood there holding my gun and felt special because I was part of something that took me seriously and I was not running from anyone anymore. I had my gun now, and as the corporal always said, “This gun is your source of power in these times. It will protect you and provide you all you need, if you know how to use it well.” (Beah, 2007)

This passage also reflects a major problem during the Sierra Leonean conflict and further conflicts that happened during the 1990s: the availability and flow of small arms. The RUF had access to ammunition and small arms from manufacturers and armed groups worldwide without any type of restriction in exchange for illegal sale of diamonds, for instance (Lawson, 2006). This not only led to the violent siege of diamond areas during the conflict, but also to the indiscriminate killings and psychosocial effects guns and arms had on child soldiers.

All things considered, a fine line exists between forced and “voluntary” recruitment, and thus, this paper considers voluntary recruitment as the “least bad option” that children can make in conflict circumstances in order to survive, given the alteration of their socioeconomic livelihood when conflict arises.

2.1.2 Recruiters' engagement of children

From the perspective of state and non-state armed groups, the recruitment of children or adolescents, entails multiple benefits. This section considers the following five as the most relevant for the purpose of understanding the situation of child soldiers in both Sierra Leone and South Sudan, which will subsequently be examined.

a) Need for human capital

During a civil conflict that takes away many lives day after day, the need for human capital from one or various sides of the conflict is constant. The longer the armed conflict, the more soldiers a group will need. Sub-Saharan African countries have the largest young population sector in the world, with more than 70% of the population under 30 years of age in Sierra Leone and South Sudan (United Nations Population Fund, 2019). Consequently, young people are considered as expendable and are recruited for the purpose of supplementing the shortage of adult soldiers (Njuguna, 2016).

b) Low-cost maintenance

Intertwined with the previous element, the cost of maintaining a child is considerably lower than that of an adult. Armed groups might not have considerable financial support and may not be able to recruit adults. Youngsters require less food and water than adults. In many cases, children are not given an income, considering food and shelter as their earning from fighting.

c) Timing

The amount of time it takes to train a child in fighting tactics, combat skills and arm performance is much lower than that of a professional soldier, given their eagerness and simplicity of rationalizing. The following statement from the testimonial book *Shooting Up: A History of Drugs in Warfare* demonstrates the rapid training of children at war:

It takes a year to train before you [a professional adult soldier] can go to the front to fight. With us, it was a week. All you have to know is to point the gun away from you and know the commands to crawl and know when to attack in ambushes. That was it. After a week, we were on the front lines.

(Kamie'nski, 2017)

d) Children's vulnerability

In terms of socioeconomic vulnerability, many child soldiers are recruited from the most marginalized sectors of society, broken homes or even as former child soldiers (Njuguna, 2016). Poverty and inequality as factors of social exclusion lead to increased vulnerability in many of these cases. Consequently, for these children it is fairly reasonable to accept joining an armed group due to the feeling of belonging and protection they consider the group will grant them. Additionally, young people

are psychologically more vulnerable than adults, who already have shaped a personality and opinions. This leads to instances where children are easily manipulated through drugs, religious rituals and fake mantras to fight or perform other activities since they are dependent on protection and guidance (Dudenhoefer, 2016).

e) Children's and adolescents' personality

Younger children and adolescents are still forming their identities and might accept dangerous tasks just for the sake of appearing more “adventurous”. This sense of fearlessness represents a comparative advantage to the feelings of adults, who might be more reticent at first. Therefore, children might even preferred over adults in this sense, due to their anxiousness to impress and immediate acceptance of dangerous tasks without analyzing them. Ishmael Beah accounts below one of the multiple instances where him and his fellow fighters were given drugs to perform the fighting or killing of people:

The combination of these drugs gave us a lot of energy and made us fierce. The idea of death didn't cross my mind at all and killing had become as easy as drinking water. My mind had not only snapped during the first killing, it had also stopped making remorseful records, or so it seemed. (Beah, 2007)

2.2 Education in post-conflict societies

Prior to analyzing the peace education advantages and models, it is crucial to address the significance of education in post-conflict societies.

Education is arguably the most important tool for the purpose of transforming and touching on every population sector. It builds the pillars of a country's values, economy, good governance, equality and culture (UNICEF, 2014). The right to education has been recognized as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and is one of the key principles of the 2030 Education Agenda (UNESCO, 2019). Education helps individuals reach their full potential and improves their quality of life through increased opportunities for potential professional and personal development. Therefore, in a war-torn society, education represents a key element to bring about changes in people's living conditions and help them from traumatizing experiences (Njuguna, 2016).

During a violent conflict, such as the ones in Sierra Leone and South Sudan, the education system will likely experience multiple problems, such as the dislocation of children and teachers, infrastructure deterioration and non-payment of education personnel (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2002). Furthermore, education might be used by one or more military/political forces as a tool for indoctrinating and manipulating young students to their particular cause (Brett & Specht, 2004). Considering the already existing low schooling rates of these countries, the impossibility of receiving any education whatsoever leads to the worsening of their circumstances, increased poverty, exclusion and possibility of falling into labor or combat. The link between the lack of education and poverty and social exclusion has regularly been discussed by humanitarian associations, NGOs and developing countries' stakeholders. For instance, the Human Development Index (HDI) studied in the first section of this paper confirms the relationship between the access to education and other poverty indicators, such as life expectancy or the GNI index (United Nations Development Programme, 2019).

Ultimately, access to education represents a **straightforward response to the question of how education can reintegrate ex-child combatants**. The impact education has on young sectors of population is substantially higher than that of adults, given the fact that schooling commonly takes place during childhood, and during this time children gain crucial life competences, namely empathy, socialization, responsibility, independence, motivation, friendship and cognitive development (Brett & Specht, 2004). Therefore, through education ex-child soldiers can acquire knowledge and skills that will eventually lead them to obtain employment and other kinds of livelihood in the future, as Jeannie Annan argues in her “economic livelihood and education” category for the successful reintegration of former child soldiers. The quality and content of education must be meaningful to their lives, promote a culture of peace and help them find adequate job opportunities. Annan explains that education promotes economic livelihood and provide individuals with values, skills, vocational training and knowledge, which will substantially avoid them from resorting to soldiering in the future (Njuguna, 2016).

Having theoretically analyzed the impact of education in the post-conflict societies, the following sections will focus on the specific approach that peace education addresses in order to serve as a key for reintegrating child ex-combatants.

2.3 Peace education as a reintegration tool

Peace education falls under the **positive approach to peace** of Johan Galtung's dichotomy between positive and negative peace, given the fact that it actively promotes activities and reflections that foster peace values in different ways: discussions, pedagogy, group activities, community service etc. Consequently, the main goal of peace education is to stimulate a change in former child combatants' behavior with each other, with themselves and towards the reality they live in.

Given the fact that individuals learn from numerous sources and situations, peace education might and should take place formally (through teaching facilities and organizations) and informally (within local communities, families and religious groups). These two categories will be analyzed in the following subsections, along with the main actors in peace education.

2.3.1 Main actors

In post-conflict backgrounds, the reintegration of child ex-combatants represents an issue that affects all sectors of society. Peace education helps these children and the societies they live in joining local and international efforts and support. Therefore, creating a culture of peace and reintegrating former child soldiers requires the involvement of diverse actors that will be briefly commented below:

a) National Governments

Members of national Governments, political parties, legislative bodies, committees and other personnel from the public administration determine the countries' direction and might be the first push towards an educational reform that includes peace education, even though it might probably need international or other kind of external support. Ultimately, the reintegration of the youth in the aftermath of an armed conflict represents an opportunity to recover a country's human development, employment and poverty rates, and thus is in the interest of all governments.

b) Civil society groups

It has been widely recognized that civil society (which includes unions, faith-based groups, clubs, professional associations and clan groups) plays a key role in peacebuilding efforts in terms of advocacy, social protection and cohesion,

program and human rights monitoring and facilitation of dialogue (Paffenholz, 2009). In the same manner, civil society groups, such as faith-based groups, which in the case of Sierra Leonean and South Sudanese societies are extremely relevant, might improve and reinforce the values that peace education promotes. It is important to consider that civil society's support in peace education will be more likely to happen in a post-conflict environment, given their long-term nature and violence reduction goals.

c) Education sector

Peace education often takes place in schools and other learning environments. Key elements concerning the education sector relate to the quality and content of the peace education curricula, adequate teacher training, a positive classroom atmosphere and appropriate learning materials (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2005).

d) Families

Parents and other relatives act as mentors who can teach children and adolescents values of values of peace such as nonviolence, justice, freedom etc. It is crucial that when children leave their schools, they are exposed to these values at their homes and in society as a whole. This might translate into the need for education programs for families and other members of the community in order to continue with peace education (Amamio, 2003).

e) External actors

International organizations such as the United Nations and its agencies (particularly UNICEF, UNESCO and the UNDP), the World Bank, regional organizations like the African Union or the European Union and international and local NGOs have developed a myriad of programs in the field of peace education. For instance, UNICEF started to develop peace education programs at the start of the 1990s in countries such as Lebanon, Liberia, Egypt, Burundi and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, among many others, aiming at targeting the roots of conflict and developing skills and attitudes among children and the communities they lived in (Fountain, 1999). The most relevant functions of external actors in relation to peace education programs, as explained by Peacebuilding Initiative, are the following:

- “- Financial support;
- Direct project implementation and service delivery (including engineering and sub-contracting);
- Technical assistance (including advice, training, etc.);
- Monitoring;
- Research and evaluation;
- Lobbying and solidarity” (Peacebuilding Initiative, 2008).

f) The media

As Chema Caballero illustrated in one of his interviews on child soldiers in Sierra Leone, the culture of violence was present during the war in all forms of media (Caballero, 2005). The daily exposure to violence through TV and radio programs entails a higher impact on the youth sector, provoking feelings of hate and intolerance. In the same manner, a state-controlled media might not show the reality that a community or country is undergoing and the fake news or information that it provides ends up entrenched in peoples’ minds. Consequently, the media must be free and cooperate with organizations in order to disseminate messages of peace, tolerance, non-violence, justice and the respect for human rights in a creative and informative way. All in all, the psychological impact of the media is a key factor that cannot be underestimated when discussing peace education programs.

The potential **challenges** stemming from the high number of actors involved in the implementation and funding of a peace education curriculum include the lack of coordination and continuity of these efforts. Traditionally, post-conflict societies receive funding for the first years of their recovery, and yet statistical research has demonstrated that economic growth and consolidated peaceful recovery start in the second four-year period after conflict, a moment in which funding will have been reduced (Samura, 2012). The involvement of donors and international agencies should not be merely limited to financial responsibility but should ensure the implementation of peace education programs from the beginning until the end. Accordingly, the objective of the involvement of diverse actors in peace education must be twofold: on the one hand, it should prioritize communication among all present initiatives and its trajectory, and on the other hand, it should aim at evaluating the progress made from the personal, community and societal lenses.

2.3.2 Peace education in formal settings

a) Learning environments

As it has been previously mentioned, schools and training facilities are crucial environments to foster the benefits of peace education. The improvement of school infrastructures (through national or international funding) and adequate materials are essential for children to feel comfortable in facilities where they spend a substantial amount of time and they will likely improve the school environment and lead to children's self-development and participation.

b) Teachers

The role of teachers and peace educators is fundamental throughout the whole process of reintegration, and thus, they must receive an adequate learning and psychosocial support prior to the start of the peace education program, as they will have likely suffered from traumatic experiences in the war (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2002). Teachers are responsible for training children on peace values, practices and thoughts that will lead to a peaceful disposition to act in a post-conflict society. It is crucial to highlight that peace education involves teaching *for* peace and not only *about* peace, although the clarification of concepts is extremely important (Wessells, 2005). Following Montessori's methods of education, an emphasis on self-discipline rather than an imposed discipline from outside will translate into a greater impact on children (Duckworth, 2008). Patience, empathy, sensitivity and openness represent key qualities peace educators must develop for the purpose of helping children feel safe and reach their full potential in such a delicate time. In the same manner, teachers must be ready to deal with conflict within classrooms, particularly when children come from opposing sides of the past conflict.

c) Content

This paper has recognized the importance of a variety of themes and areas of study when addressing peace education curricula. According to Ian Harris, there are five not mutually exclusive approaches to peace education: international education, human rights education, development education, environmental education and conflict resolution education (Harris I. M., 2004). These categories represent key areas that peace education programs might focus on, given that they are extensive and complementary. Nevertheless, it is crucial that they are taught in a neutral and open manner, which might be an element of concern in societies where the national interest might bias human rights' issues and realities, for instance.

d) Methodology

The final goal of peace education is to change the behavior and mindset of children who have been subjected to and witnessed acts of violence, traumatic experiences and socioeconomic vulnerability. Therefore, the methodology of peace education must vary from case to case and be carefully aimed at the personal flourishing and development of young ex-combatants. In this sense, activities and pedagogy might be separated into two categories, despite the direct effect that they will have on the individual.

- **Individual learning:**

Readings and workshops based on student's analysis and reflective thinking that will help them deepen their understanding of major dimensions, namely conflict, peace, justice, human rights, tolerance and forgiveness will depend on teachers' engagement and student's involvement in the program. As Montessori argues, fostering critical thought is vital for a democratic atmosphere where citizens will be less likely to be manipulated and misled into conflict (Duckworth, 2008). The student will acquire theoretical and practical skills that will help him/her to thrive in future situations of competition and conflict.

- **Collaborative learning:**

Through group activities, discussions and games children are capable of developing cooperation, empathy, negotiation and teambuilding skills. These will build trust between them and motivate them to participate and put into practice what they learn at school in their communities. However, children who have been subject to trauma might not find group discussions supportive at the very beginning, given the fact that listening to the troubles of others, "far from being a warm sharing experience, overloads them with pain" (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2002). Therefore, teachers and peace educators must pay attention to each individual case prior to shaping activities and explicit sharing experiences.

2.3.3 Peace education in informal settings

Within this category, this paper considers families and communities as the most important complementary peace education environments where former child soldiers will find comfort and personal development to recover from the atrocities they witnessed or committed during conflict.

a) Objective

Child ex-combatants might face serious challenges when reintegrating into their families and communities due to various reasons. Members of the community might not want to welcome youngsters who have committed mass atrocities to civilians (torture, killings, amputations, gang rape...) and children might face stigmatization and isolation. In the case of former girl soldiers, being subject to forced marriages and sexual abuse may be seen as a loss of honor for families and if they have children as a curse for them (Njuguna, 2016). The key element in the majority of cases is to **rebuild trust** within families and community members. A culture of peace and peace education are thus essential components of the process of rebuilding trust, as authors like Elise Boulding have highlighted. Boulding believes that conflict and peace start at the heart of a home and a community, for instance in family dynamics or community relations on a daily basis. She is an advocate of peace talks from bottom to top, given that peace must be created at all levels of society and not only in political summits (Morrison, 2006).

b) Methodology

First of all, a potential starting point in the peace education methodology within communities that authors like Michael Wessells have suggested is the **discussion and acknowledgment** stage. Through support groups and dialogues, members of families and communities can learn from the actual reasons and consequences of children's involvement in armed groups, as well as build on empathy, tolerance and understanding. It is essential to communicate to families and communities the important role they can play in fostering peace education interests and activities which will reintegrate their children into society. Secondly, the **planning and physical reconstruction** of a community's piece of infrastructure (a school, health center or shop) might become a project that engages various members of the community, including former child soldiers, for the purpose of conducting a collective hands-on project that will have tangible results. Physical reconstruction has been identified as having powerful effects on the mutual trust building among people (Wessells, 2005). Similarly, undertaking **cultural activities** like sports or art can bring people together and create social bonds between different sectors of society, resulting in enhanced common interests and background (Amamio, 2003). Team sports and art activities represent instances where members of a family or a community set aside their differences and past remorse to accomplish a unified goal. Lastly, **religious figures** in sub-Saharan African communities are traditionally very

relevant. Consequently, religious guidance and discussions with former child soldiers, as well as other spiritual healing processes might help (Wessells, 2005).

Taking into consideration the different approaches within formal and informal learning environments mentioned above, a brief overview of education systems and conditions in Sierra Leone and South Sudan is provided below, in order to conclude with the benefits or need for peace education approaches in both societies.

2.4 Education in post-conflict Sierra Leone

During the pre-civil war period, Sierra Leone had a low schooling rate, with only four out of every ten school-age children accessing education (Wurie, 2007). The main reason why was the high cost of education and the almost inexistent training facilities. This led to a considerably high unemployment rate and uneducated people, which made soldiering for children a viable option, as it has been previously mentioned. Among the myriad scars that the war left, the ones suffered by the education sector were considerable: hundreds of schools and university colleges were burnt, teaching materials halved, teachers and students were displaced, and classrooms were overcrowded (Barrios-Tao, Siciliani-Barraza, & Bonilla-Barrios, 2016). In addition, around 67% of all school-age children were out of school (Ozisik, 2015).

After the signature of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999, the youth sector required special attention and was not willing to fall back into further poverty. Therefore, the Government started to shape a new education system focused on universal access, skills acquisition, counselling and flexibility once armed conflict was completely over (Wurie, 2007). Since that moment the Government and education ministries started to shape National Education Master Plans, starting with the 1997-2006 plan. This plan dealt with all aspects of the formal and non-formal sectors of the education system and focused on the implementation of the 6-3-3-4 system, with nine years of basic education (six years of primary and three of junior secondary school) (Alghali, Turay, Johnson, & Kandeh, 2005). In 2007, around 75% of children attended school and the literacy rate was at 60% of the population from 15 to 24 years (UNICEF, 2013).

The key elements of the post-conflict education reform in Sierra Leone were twofold: on the one hand, the school curriculum modifications, adding peace and HIV-AIDS education, and the intense work of the Guidance and Counseling Unit Syllabuses; on the other hand, the Complimentary Rapid Education for Primary Schools (CREPS)

was established, a UNICEF and other NGOs' program that condensed six years of primary education into three years, directed to children who had only completed one or two years of schooling by the time the war broke out (Wurie, 2007). Additionally, the United States Agency for International Development Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI) collaborated with the Sierra Leonean Government to inaugurate the Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP) in 1999 (USAID, 2002), and will be discussed below.

At the present time, the 2018-2020 Education Sector Plan (ESP) that follows the 6-3-4-4 education system reform of 2013 is being implemented, taking into consideration the lessons learnt from the devastating Ebola epidemic that put schools to a close for approximately nine months (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2018).

2.4.1 Peace education in Sierra Leone

This section will analyze two internationally-funded programs that were put into action with support of the national Government during two diverging moments of the conflict. The first one was YRTEP, a USAID-funded program carried out in 1999, and the second one was a World Bank-led peace education project in 2002, after the conflict had ceased. The similarities and differences in their approaches to peace education will be subsequently examined.

a) Youth Reintegration Training and Education for Peace Program (YRTEP)

YRTEP was a nation-wide, community-based, informal education initiative for ex-combatant and war-affected young adults established after the signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement in 1999, when conflict in Sierra Leone appeared to be ending (USAID, 2002).

Its main **objectives** were to aid in the reintegration of former ex-combatants and war-torn communities and to provide education for the youth who had been suffering during those years (USAID, 2002).

The program's **approach** consisted of a number of modules (delivered by teams of two trainers per group of 20 participants) of non-formal education in areas, such as "reintegration and sensitization for ex-combatants; vocational and life skills counseling; livelihood skills development in agriculture and other labor-intensive areas; protecting the environment; health issues; civic education; and functional literacy and numeracy" (Fauth & Daniels, 2001). In order to address the curriculum's

themes, the program's methodology consisted of self-discovery exercises within classrooms and communities along with lessons on peace and reconciliation (USAID, 2002).

The overall **results** of YRTEP were positive. Youngsters who had been child soldiers and participated in the program positively changed their behaviors regarding violence, relationships with girls and family members. because the training gave them a better understanding of such actions and helped them realize that such behavior was wrong. Nevertheless, regarding literacy and numeracy the educational advancements were not significant. Instead, YRTEP helped participants' self-confidence as a result of "learning how to spell one's name or make short shopping lists instead of becoming functionally literate" (Fauth & Daniels, 2001). Community members reported impressive results of the improvement of youth behavior, as well as the productivity and educational activities that they conducted thanks to the training and coping mechanisms (USAID, 2002).

As with any other program, YRTEP was not exempt from **challenges and weaknesses** in its implementation and results. In the first place, given the persistence of violence and conflict during the program's implementation, the results and performance was undermined. Secondly, it was reported that the program did not pay enough attention to the closure of the modules and trainings, leaving participants frustrated when they wanted to put their skills into practice. Lastly, teacher training was only partially completed, due to institutional instability in the country, and thus, a number of classes and activities did not have all the desired instruction and outcomes.

b) World Bank's peace education project in Sierra Leone

This program took place during 2002 and consisted of a collaboration between the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) in Sierra Leone and World Bank teams of peace education experts.

The main **objectives** of the project were to develop teacher training to instruct peace education and further needs for children in a post-conflict society, and to draw together peace education resources (uniting education stakeholders' interests, initiatives and practices) (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2005).

The **methodology** that was framed in the program included various lessons and activities. For instance, writing activities, teaching core concepts for peace, providing basic knowledge on English and Social Studies, health and Physical Education and the

Arts, enhancing communication skills within communities and increasing conflict resolution competences with group projects on a daily basis.

The overall **results** and feedback were positive and suggested that the structure and content of the peace education toolkit were useful and appropriate to the circumstances of Sierra Leone (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2005). The most important conclusion that the mission revealed was the training of teachers to implement materials and activities in post-conflict conditions, as well as the continuity of children's education within their communities, as they later described in letters and emails to the program's direction.

In the case of this program, the identified **weaknesses** were more logistically related. Initially, damaged infrastructures and lack of materials made it difficult to train teachers and create safe and adequate learning environments.

All in all, these two internationally-funded peace education programs took place at different times of the conflict or post-conflict periods in Sierra Leone. Taking into consideration the traumatic experiences that some of the children had lived during the war, both projects had the mission of reconciliation, sensitization and education of children, teachers, families and communities. It is clear that the risks of falling back into conflictive behaviors were higher during the implementation of the first program than during the second one, given the persisting threats of violence until 2002. While the World Bank program prioritized teachers' training, the USAID project focused on the actual curriculum, leading to different results as it has been mentioned earlier.

Following the examination of these programs, it is key to look at the education situation in South Sudan in order to highlight the challenges that will have to be taken into account when shaping a peace education model in this country.

2.5 Education in South Sudan

As a result of the decades of civil war that the country has undergone, most adults and children in South Sudan have barely had the opportunities of attending school. Therefore, the development of a basic education system and adequate infrastructures has not been an easy task for the Government. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology (MoEST) has established a parallel education system: the first option is to undertake the 8-4-4 education model with 8 years of primary, four of secondary and four of university education. The second option is the Alternative Education Systems (AES)

consisting of different programs, including an Accelerated Learning Programme (ALP) and a Community Girls School (CGS), which offers flexible entry and exit points for children, youth, and adults (Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology, 2015).

In spite of the fact that the MoEST and other Government reports have outlined ambitious programs and objectives in order to tackle inequality and provide appropriate education for all South Sudanese citizens, the country's public expenditure in education is one of the world's lowest, which can be reflected on the fragility of the country's economy. This manifests in the infrastructure number and distribution within the country's States: there are around 8,000 primary schools, 120 secondary schools and one university in South Sudan. Additionally, there is only one functional teacher training college in the country that must meet the demand for all teachers' training (Global Partnership for Education, 2018). Undoubtedly, the Government's capacity building in terms of education has been undermined by constant conflict and other basic needs of the population. The desired results that the MoEST has delineated in the General Education Sector Plan (GESP) of 2017-2022, titled "Planning for Safety, Resilience and Social Cohesion", will need time and national and international financial support (Global Partnership for Education, 2018).

3. Conclusions and recommendations

This section will on the one hand recapitulate the major points that this research paper has discussed and on the other hand provide the requirements for a potential peace education model in present South Sudan.

3.1 Recapitulation

Children have been direct victims of armed conflicts in Sierra Leone and South Sudan, particularly the ones who have fought as combatants. As it has been mentioned in previous sections, the reasons why children and adolescents join these groups are varied, but probably the most notable ones are their vulnerability, the need for socioeconomic support and the feeling of belonging within these organizations. Similarly, youngsters represent comparative advantages for recruiters in many different ways: they are expendable, quick learners, courageous and easy to impress. Nevertheless, the wounds and traumatic experiences that these conflicts leave on children are not only physical, but psychological and psychosocial.

The lack of opportunities and alternatives for these children during conflict or once it has ceased only worsens their situation and directly affects a country's human development and growth. Education represents a key element to transform people's reality worldwide, providing them with knowledge, skills and values that will lead them to find motivation and being capable of making changes in their societies through job opportunities, community projects or human rights advocacy among other advancements. Under armed warfare, education systems and facilities are most likely altered or devastated, as it was seen in the case of Sierra Leone. Both countries have undergone various educational reforms and drawn agendas for the purpose of attempting to enhance the country's literacy rate and people's development.

In post-conflict situations, peacebuilding initiatives and missions are implemented by national Governments, and particularly by the United Nations and its agencies, the World Bank and other international actors, such as NGOs, regional and religious organizations etc. Peace education falls within one of the peacebuilding activities that might be conducted in a post-conflict society, given its long-term nature. The concept has been defined in different ways, but its ultimate objective is to “draw out, enrich, deepen and place in context students' thinking about the concept of peace” (Bretherton, Weston, & Zbar, 2005). Therefore, peace education is a holistic approach that helps former child ex-combatants to reintegrate into society and thrive in numerous life dimensions. Different programs have been put into action in post-conflict societies, namely two of the Sierra Leonean ones that have been previously discussed. These programs build on values such as empathy, cooperation, humanity, tolerance and peaceful coexistence and take place in formal and informal learning environments, schools and communities. Their conclusive objective is to reduce conflict and help former child soldiers achieve a positive role in society.

3.2 A potential peace education model for South Sudan

Having previously examined the current situation of South Sudan's conflict and education system, it is essential to take those elements into consideration when shaping a conceivable peace education program in this country.

In the first place, defining the **moment** in which a peace education program might be implemented in South Sudan is essential. We can argue that the requirements in this sense might be threefold:

1. Strategic DDR initiatives must be carried out along with genuine national efforts aiming at starting a reconciliation process. Once militarization and daily confrontations end, the Government together with regional and international actors (the African Union, UN's agencies and further organizations) can start mapping the number of children to take part in the programs for their reintegration.
2. The commitment to halt the supply of small arms to South Sudan.
3. The immediate peacebuilding activities, such as the reconstruction of infrastructures and learning facilities to resume daily life are fundamental in order to ensure safe spaces where children and communities can learn and interact. The development and implementation of development plans by South Sudan must specifically take children's needs into account. When these changes are successful, children are at a lower risk for re-recruitment.

Secondly, the program must be **tailored** to the needs of the children and communities in every state of the country. In the case of Sierra Leone, amputations and sexual abuses were some of the main issues when addressing children with trauma in the post-conflict education environment. In the case of South Sudan, sexual violence has recently been reported as one of the main problems stemming from poverty and conflict (Cumming-Bruce, 2019). Consequently, peace education programs will not only have to deal with the causes and consequences of South Sudan's conflict and the emphasis on peace within ethnic groups, but especially the importance of recovering children's identity and psychosocial wellbeing. In the case of girls, acknowledging their experiences and sensitively working with families to reduce prejudice and hatred might be key to restore trust and empathy.

Thirdly, as it has been previously introduced, **coordination** among all actors is crucial when shaping these comprehensive programs. A peace education program such as the YRTEP in Sierra Leone could be devised by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) of South Sudan and transmitted to the UN and other international institutions, the media, NGOs working in the country and families and communities in all country's areas. A successful coordination facilitates **external funding** (which is likely to be necessary in a post-conflict environment), and thus, homogeneous and clear objectives are crucial for the coordination of all actors of society.

Fourthly, one of the main priorities of peace education programs is **teacher's training**. As it has been previously examined, South Sudan does not account for sufficient training facilities or programs within the country, particularly in rural areas. In recent years, NGO's and development agencies such as USAID have provided country's teachers with materials and assistance at a community level (for instance the three-year *Room to Learn* project³). The continuity and further implementation of these training initiatives represents a major feature of a successful peace education model. Moreover, this guidance must consist of materials, a varied methodology, advice on how to teach peace education values in a simple manner, as well as addressing the potential trauma that teachers might present after a conflict. Pedagogy and methodology might range from group work and discussions to reflective and problem-solving activities as it has been mentioned in the methodology section.

In the fifth place, **engaging families and communities** is one of the major objectives of peace education programs, especially in societies where conflict has destroyed trust and built hatred among people from the same or diverging families or ethnic groups. Cooperation at a local level through sport and art activities, group discussions, religious dialogues and reconstruction projects is extremely important to encourage the development of conflict resolution skills and recover trust and tolerance. This part reflects the long-term nature of these programs, but also the relevance of their development to heal entire societies and recover the motivation of children to thrive.

Lastly, **evaluation and monitoring** throughout the learning process will reveal the extent to which the programs to reintegrate former child soldiers have been successful. One of the deficiencies of the YRTEP in Sierra Leone was the immediate withdrawal of teachers and programs without a clear evaluation and continuity, despite the initial intensity of the program. Considering the difficulties that South Sudan will have to overcome in the next years to restore itself and be able to develop and grow, an adequate evaluation and monitoring will display the advancements to the whole region and especially to the children and teachers that will have been working on the progress of society.

To conclude, despite recent allegations of human rights violations, the August peace agreement 2018 has opened a window of opportunity for South Sudan through which a

³ The following website provides more information on the *Room to Learn (RtL)* project: <https://www.winrock.org/project/room-to-learn-south-sudan/>

long-term peacebuilding process might gradually be introduced in the following years, once states are demilitarized and the agreement's conditions implemented. Moreover, the change in Government in the Republic of Sudan might additionally contribute to a transition where the relationship between the two countries is no longer based on disputes and animosity. Time, national, regional and international support and coordination are key to ensure that the South Sudanese people, and particularly children, will thrive in the next years after having undergone the horrors of a civil conflict since its independence. International awareness of this issue through the media and global literature might make increasingly accessible the experiences that these youngsters live, and hopefully lead to additional pressure to coordinate efforts and prevent the stealing of children's lives.

“We must strive to be like the moon.” An old man in Kabati repeated this sentence often to people who walked past his house on their way to the river to fetch water, to hunt, to tap palm wine; and to their farms. I remember asking my grandmother what the old man meant. She explained that the adage served to remind people to always be on their best behavior and to be good to others. She said that people complain when there is too much sun and it gets unbearably hot, and also when it rains too much or when it is cold. But, no one grumbles when the moon shines. Everyone becomes happy and appreciates the moon in their own special way. Children watch their shadows and play in its light, people gather at the square to tell stories and dance through the night. A lot of happy things happen when the moon shines. These are some of the reasons why we should want to be like the moon.” (Beah, 2007)

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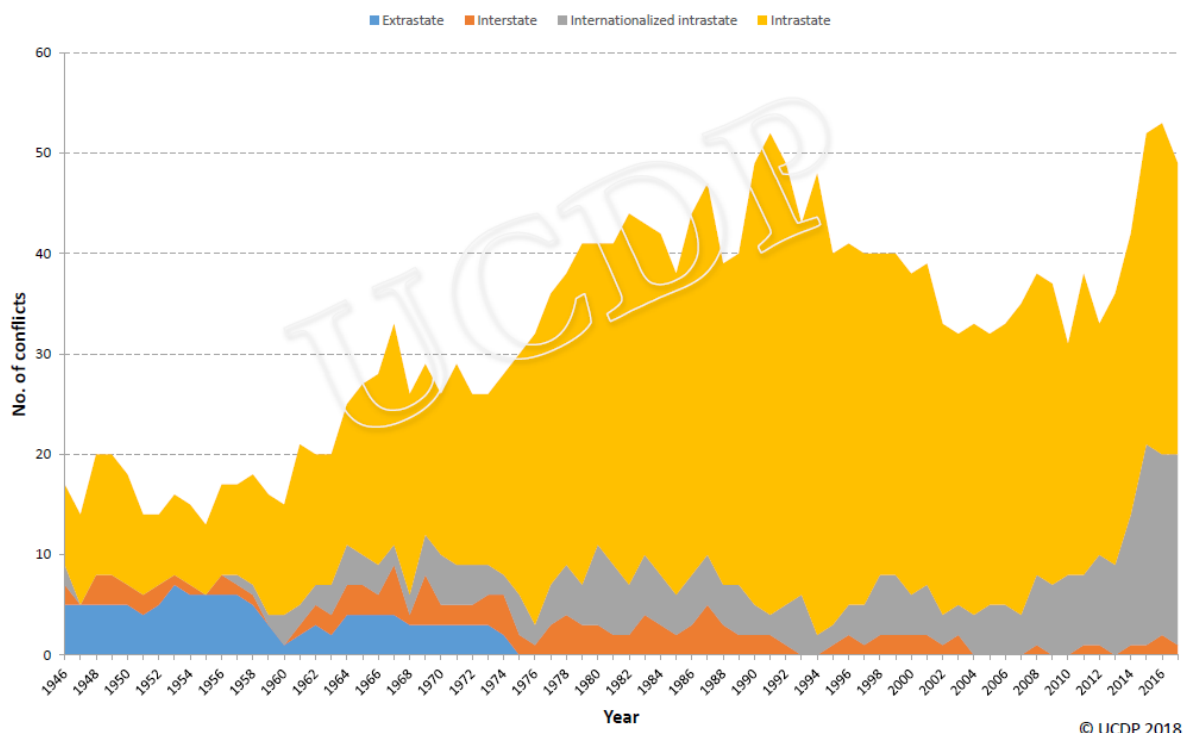
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5. Annexes

5.1 Global trends of armed conflicts



(Pettersson & Eck, 2018)

5.2 Global Peace Index (GPI) 2018

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	CHANGE
84	Trinidad & Tobago	2.053	↑ 11	113	Thailand	2.259	↑ 7	141	Palestine	2.621	↑ 3
86	Mozambique	2.056	↓ 6	114	Tajikistan	2.266	↑ 3	142	Egypt	2.632	↓ 2
87	Macedonia (FYR)	2.058	↑ 16	115	Djibouti	2.269	↓ 5	143	Venezuela	2.642	↓ 2
88	Haiti	2.064	↓ 1	116	El Salvador	2.275	↑ 1	144	Mali	2.686	↓ 1
89	Bosnia & Herzegovina	2.065	↓ 3	116	Guinea-Bissau	2.275	↑ 5	145	Colombia	2.729	↑ 1
90	Jamaica	2.068	↑ 3	118	Honduras	2.282	↓ 10	146	Israel	2.764	↓ 1
91	Dominican Republic	2.073	↑ 9	119	Turkmenistan	2.283	↓ 3	147	Lebanon	2.778	↔
92	Kosovo	2.078	↓ 15	120	Armenia	2.287	↓ 7	148	Nigeria	2.873	↑ 1
93	Bangladesh	2.084	↓ 10	121	USA	2.3	↓ 1	149	Turkey	2.898	↓ 1
94	Bolivia	2.092	↓ 9	122	Myanmar	2.302	↓ 15	150	North Korea	2.95	↔
95	Gabon	2.099	↓ 12	123	Kenya	2.354	↑ 3	151	Pakistan	3.079	↑ 1
96	Cambodia	2.101	↓ 18	124	Zimbabwe	2.326	↓ 1	152	Ukraine	3.113	↑ 2
96	Guinea	2.101	↓ 1	125	South Africa	2.328	↓ 1	153	Sudan	3.155	↑ 2
98	Jordan	2.104	↑ 4	126	Rep of the Congo	2.343	↑ 2	154	Russia	3.16	↓ 1
98	Togo	2.104	↓ 32	127	Mauritania	2.355	↔	155	Central African Rep	3.236	↑ 1
100	Papua New Guinea	2.109	↓ 3	128	Niger	2.359	↓ 2	156	Dem. Rep Congo	3.251	↓ 5
101	Belarus	2.112	↓ 2	129	Saudi Arabia	2.417	↑ 1	157	Libya	3.262	↑ 1
102	Georgia	2.13	↓ 4	130	Bahrain	2.437	↑ 2	158	Yemen	3.305	↓ 1
103	Rwanda	2.14	↑ 1	131	Iran	2.439	↓ 2	159	Somalia	3.367	↔
104	Lesotho	2.144	↓ 13	132	Azerbaijan	2.454	↑ 2	160	Iraq	3.425	↑ 1
104	Uzbekistan	2.144	↓ 3	133	Cameroon	2.484	↓ 2	161	South Sudan	3.508	↓ 1
106	Brazil	2.16	↑ 1	134	Burundi	2.488	↑ 5	162	Afghanistan	3.585	↓ 1
107	Uganda	2.168	↔	135	Chad	2.498	↑ 3	163	Syria	3.6	↔
108	Kyrgyz Republic	2.181	↑ 4	136	India	2.504	↑ 1				
109	Algeria	2.182	↓ 3	137	Philippines	2.512	↓ 1				
110	Cote d' Ivoire	2.207	↑ 9	138	Eritrea	2.522	↓ 3				
111	Guatemala	2.214	↑ 3	139	Ethiopia	2.524	↓ 6				
112	China	2.243	↑ 3	140	Mexico	2.583	↑ 2				

(Institute for Economics & Peace, 2018)

5.3 Sierra Leone's profile

a) Country's map



(GOV.UK, 2019)

b) Sierra Leones' conflict timeline

1991: Revolutionary United Front (RUF) begins its attacks on Sierra Leone from neighboring Liberia.

1992: Military coup against President Joseph Momoh and creation of the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC).

1995: RUF control of an increasingly large part of the country.

1996: November 1996: The Abidjan Peace Agreement is signed between the RUF and the Government. It comprised the RUF into a political party.

1997: The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) overthrow President Kabbah's Government and later invite the RUF to join their military junta.

1998: Nigerian-led ECOMOG (Economic Community of West African States' Monitoring Group) forces overthrow AFRC's military junta.

July 1999: Signing of the Lomé Peace Agreement between President Kabbah's Government and the RUF. Creation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

January 1999: RUF attack Freetown. After weeks of fighting with numerous casualties and wounded civilians, ECOMOG forces restore control.

October 1999: The UN Security Council establishes the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL).

May 2000: The RUF captures UN peacekeepers as hostages and recaptures its arms and ammunition. The leader of the RUF is arrested and the UN Security Council increases UNAMSIL forces in the country to restore order.

2001: Signing of the Abuja Ceasefire Agreement between President Kabbah's Government and the RUF.

2002: the civil war is declared over after 11 years of fighting and the Special Court for Sierra Leone to bring the RUF fighters to justice.

2004: after two years of work, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission publishes a report.

c) UNAMSIL

The UN Security Council unanimously adopts resolution 1270 (October 1999), establishing the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its personnel and protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence.



(Kaikai, 2018)

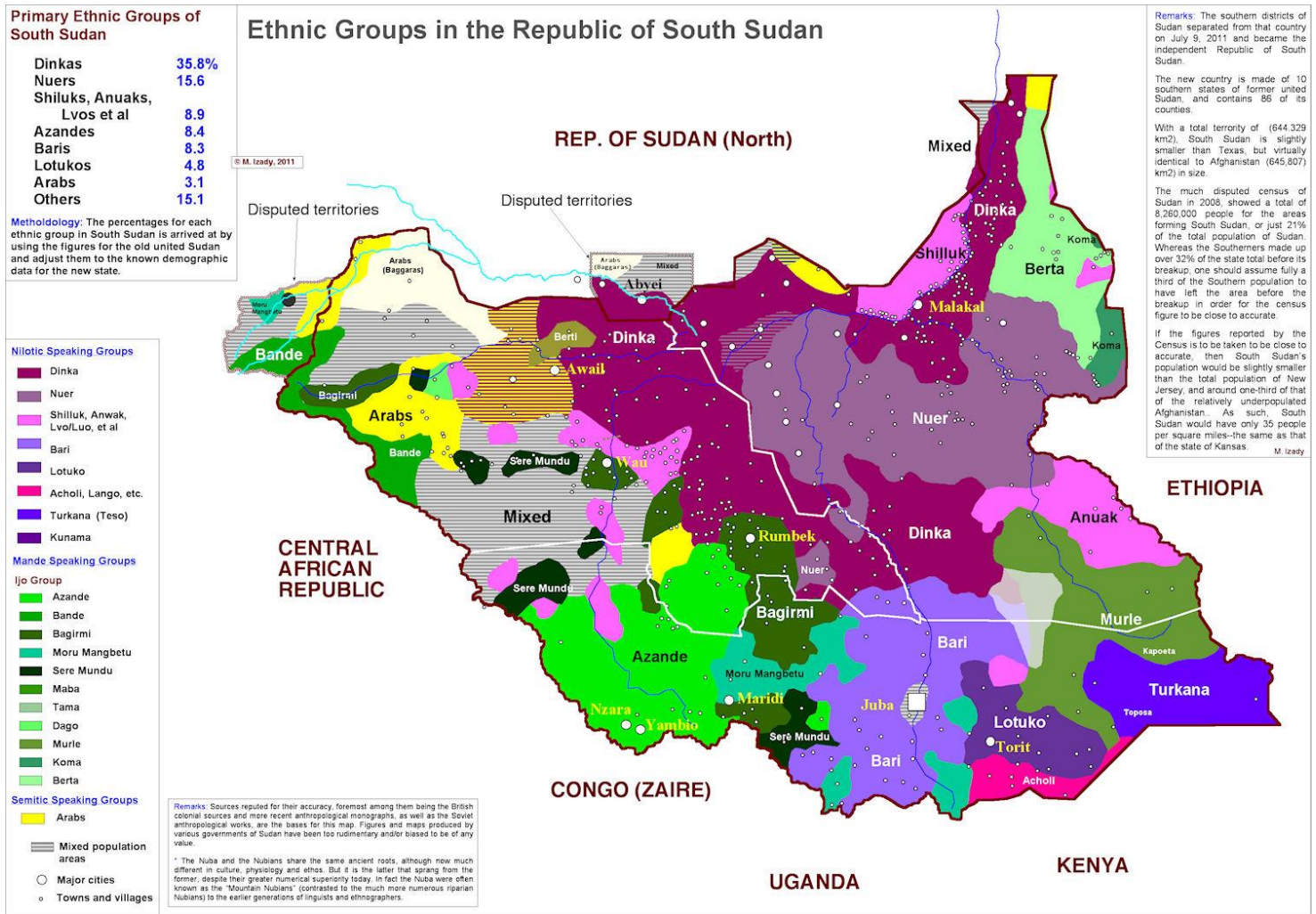
Ishmael Beah, author of A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, as a UNICEF ambassador in Sierra Leone.



(UNICEF, 2016)

5.4 South Sudan's profile

a) Country's map and ethnic groups



b) South Sudan's conflict timeline

July 2011: South Sudan's independence day. President Salva Kiir appoints opposition leader Riek Machar as Vice-President.

The UN establishes the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

2012: Sudan and South Sudan's presidents hold talks in Ethiopia and agree trade, oil and security deals.

July 2013: President Kiir dismisses Vice-President Machar and entire cabinet after a power struggle within the governing Sudan's People's Liberation Movement (SPLM).

December 2013: Civil war erupts due to accusations from President Kiir to Machar of plotting a coup.

August 2015: Signing of a peace agreement between the SPLM and the SPLM/A-IO.

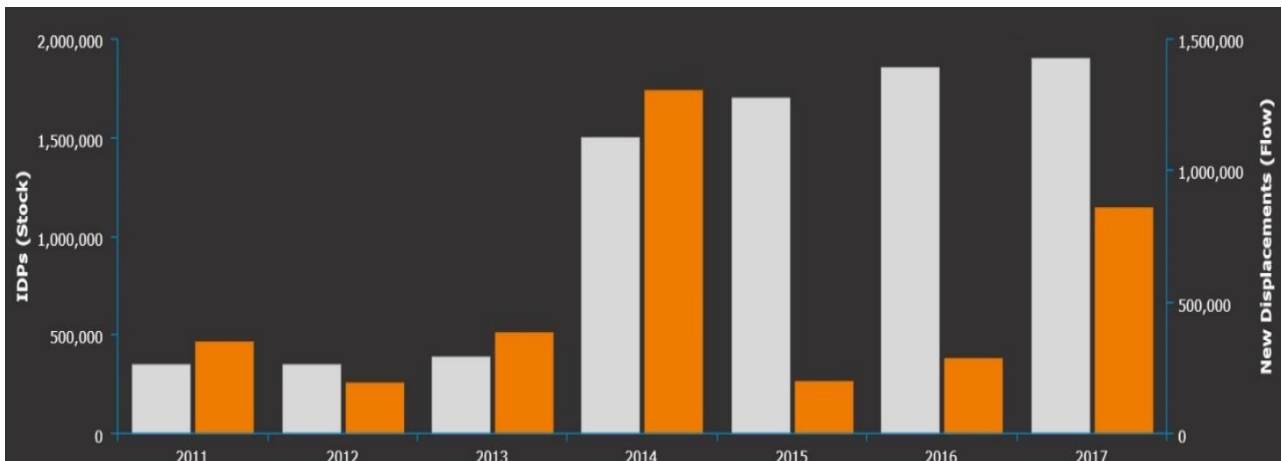
2016: December: the UN commission declares that a process of ethnic cleansing is taking place in several parts of the country, a claim that President Kiir denies.

2017: President Kiir declares unilateral ceasefire and launches national dialogue.

August 2018: Signing of a power-sharing agreement between President Kiir and Riek Machar and other opposition groups aiming at ending the civil war. Machar returns to Government as one of the five vice-presidents.

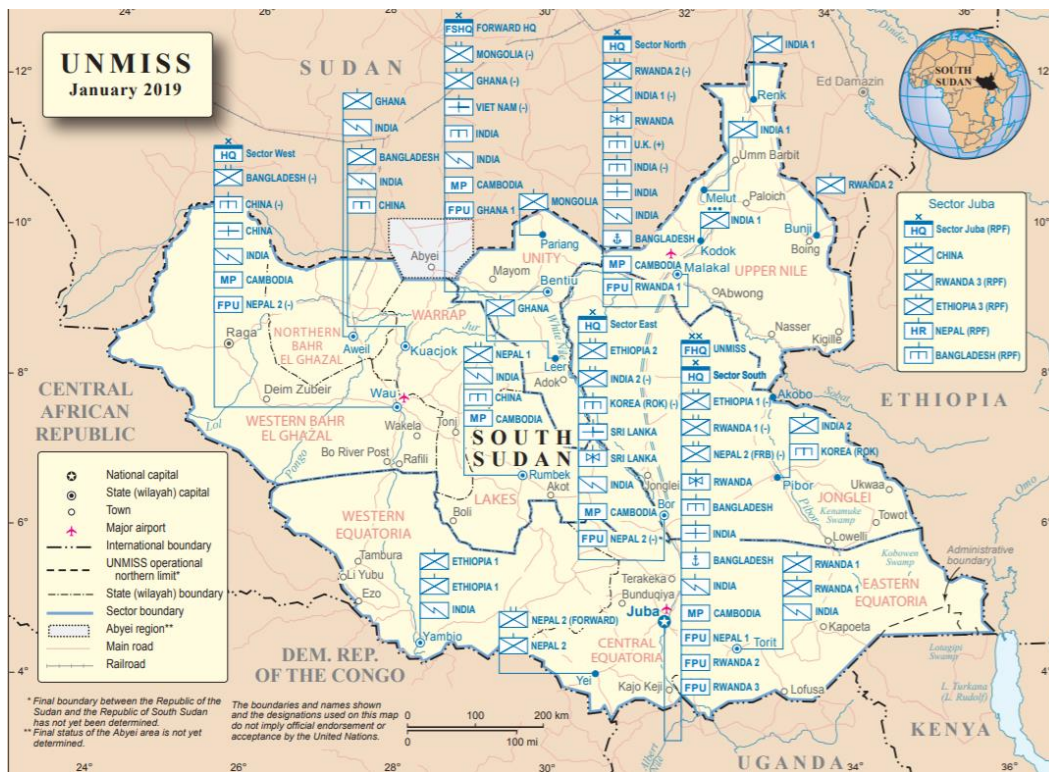
(Security Council Report, 2019)

c) Internally Displaced Persons in South Sudan



(Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2019)

d) UNMISS 2018



(United Nations, 2019)

e) August 2018 Peace agreement

South Sudan's President Salva Kiir (right) holds hands with Sudan's President Omar Al-Bashir, Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni and rebel leader Riek Machar (left) during a peace meeting in Khartoum (Sudan) as part of talks to negotiate an end to the civil war in South Sudan in August 2018.



(Mamdani, 2018).