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**CHILDREN'S RIGHTS IN POST-CONFLICT
UGANDA AND SIERRA LEONE**

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ABSTRACT

Uganda and Sierra Leone are among many of the African countries that have been affected by conflicts and wars. These conflicts mainly affected the children who were forcefully recruited and manipulated into committing atrocities like murder and destruction of property. The children lived in fear of their lives but a gun was a ticket to survival. Uganda and Sierra Leone experienced high numbers of child soldiers from the Lord's Resistance Army and the Revolutionary Front respectively.

This research paper focuses on how both states dealt with the promotion and protection of children's rights in the post-conflict era. Despite the fact that in both states children were greatly affected by the conflicts it is important to note that different countries have different needs thus the different responses by the states. Sierra Leone used the TRC as a national reconciliation process as well as the Special Court of Sierra Leone to try perpetrators for war crimes while Uganda used rehabilitative centres to offer counselling to the children, provide resettlement packages, provisions of the Amnesty Act and the creation of an International Crimes Division. Uganda introduced free secondary education for children as Sierra Leone introduced a free health care policy for children. Sierra Leone re-established the dysfunctional juvenile courts to deal with child offenders while Uganda introduced local council courts at village level which became the courts of first instance in case of children's rights violations. The media, police and human rights commissions all played a role in the promotion and protection of children rights. Children with disabilities as a result of the conflicts were also recognised in society. Both states have done a commendable job in upholding and promoting the rights of the child but there is still more to be desired.

However this research recommends that the states need to establish strong birth registration systems which is a tool that will be used in the recruitment of child soldiers, ombudspersons for children, increase in the budget in order to allocate funds for resources, involvement of children in policy making and to improve on the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in order to improve on the protection and promotion of children's rights in Uganda and Sierra Leone.

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