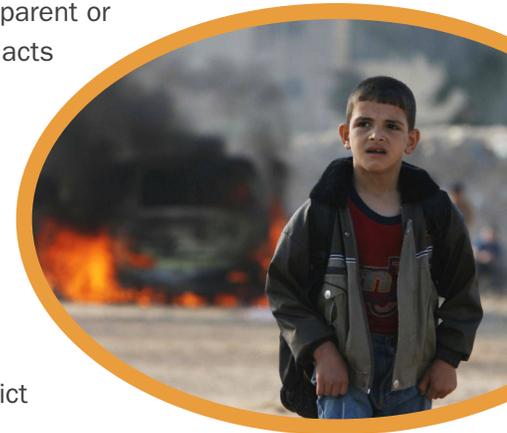


# CHILDREN IN A WORLD OF CONFLICT



Children in armed conflict routinely experience many types of emotionally and psychologically painful events. These events might include separation from family; disruption of school life; the death of a parent or close relative; exposure to combat or bombing; and acts of abuse such as being abducted, arrested, or held in detention. In recent decades, the proportion of civilian casualties in armed conflicts has increased dramatically and is now estimated at more than 90%. About half of the victims are children.



## The United Nations estimates that:

- More than 2 million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict over the last decade.<sup>1</sup>
- More than three times that number — at least 6 million children — have been either permanently disabled or seriously injured.<sup>1</sup>
- More than 1 million have been orphaned or separated from their families.<sup>1</sup>
- Between 8,000 and 10,000 children are harmed by landmines every year.<sup>1</sup>
- An estimated 300,000 child soldiers — boys and girls under the age of 18 — are involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

## Word Match

In the space next to each word, write the correct letter corresponding to its definition from the column on the right. (Answer key on reverse side.)

- |          |                          |   |
|----------|--------------------------|---|
| Refugee  | <input type="checkbox"/> | A. a group of citizens organized for military service   |
| Militia  | <input type="checkbox"/> | B. an encased explosive that is placed just below the top of the ground and designed to be exploded usually by the weight of vehicles or people passing over it |
| Conflict | <input type="checkbox"/> | C. one that flees; especially: a person who flees to a foreign country or power to escape danger or persecution   |
| Landmine | <input type="checkbox"/> | D. people who renounce and resist by force the authority of their government  |
| Rebels   | <input type="checkbox"/> | E. discord or lack of agreement or harmony between people   |

(All definitions from Merriam-Webster Online at [www.Merriam-Webster.com](http://www.Merriam-Webster.com).)

**LEARN MORE**  
about children in a  
world of conflict and  
other global issues at  
[www.teachunicef.org](http://www.teachunicef.org).

# CHILDREN IN A WORLD OF CONFLICT

## What is UNICEF doing?

In addition to partnering with other organizations to provide essential supplies (food, water, medical supplies) during armed conflict, UNICEF works to help:

- Disarm and reintegrate child soldiers back into their communities.
- Reunite children with their families.
- Provide basic education.
- Ensure that services reach children who are disabled.



## Elementary School Attendance Rates in Countries at War<sup>2</sup> (1999-2004)

COUNTRY	BOYS	GIRLS
Afghanistan	66%	40%
Chad	46%	33%
Guinea-Bissau	44%	38%
Liberia	59%	53%
Rwanda	75%	75%
Somalia	12%	10%

Which country has the highest percentage of boys attending elementary school? .....

Which country has the lowest percentage of girls attending elementary school? .....

Which countries have fewer than half their children attending elementary school? .....

What is the average attendance rate for boys in all six countries? ..... Girls? .....

What can you infer from this data?

(Answer key below.)

## Thoughtful Discussion

Think of an example of a conflict in your own life that you resolved peacefully. Individuals in history like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. have argued for non-violent resistance while others argue that war is sometimes necessary and unavoidable. What do you think?

Armed conflict is something that has existed since the beginning of recorded human history. Conflict is a part of life, but conflict does not have to lead to violence. What do you think?

## TAKE ACTION

Want to make a difference?  
Learn how at  
[www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction](http://www.unicef.org/voy/takeaction).

### Answers

Answers: Rwanda: 75%; Liberia: 59%; Guinea-Bissau: 44%; Chad: 46%; Afghanistan: 66%; Somalia: 12%

Answers: C; A; E; B; D

### Sources

1. [www.unicef.org/protection/index\\_armedconflict.html](http://www.unicef.org/protection/index_armedconflict.html)
2. UNICEF, *State of the World's Children* report, 2006