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Available online: January 31, 2018.

To cite this article:

Dyikuk, J. J. (2018). Silence of Journalists about Children in Conflict: A Critical Assessment. *International Journal of Applied Research and Technology*. 7(1): 25 – 40.

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Silence of Journalists about Children in Conflict: A Critical Assessment

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(Received: 22 December 2017 / Accepted: 04 January 2018 / Published: 31 January 2018).

Abstract

The increasing rate of children in conflict globally is alarming. Despite lack of sufficient data, the volume of unheard stories of the abuse of kids from the domestic front to global flashpoints makes the situation worrisome. The seeming silence of journalists in calling the attention of the world to these injustices against the most vulnerable members of society who are caught in-between the fire line either as child soldiers or sex slaves informed this study. With the aid of the source credibility theory as theoretical framework, the researcher discovered the culpability of the media in standing for children as well as fear of stigmatization by kids to report abuse cases. The study recommended education and empowerment of children, naming and shaming of abusers and the enforcement of child-friendly laws as panacea. It concluded that so long as kids are still affected by conflicts, the world cannot give up fighting for their cause.

Keywords: Conflict, Journalism, Kids, New, Silence.

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Subject: 1217-0217.

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Introduction

The survival of humanity depends on offspring. This is why children are inarguably a special gift to humanity. Their presence brings joy in any home (Castillo, 2016 and Rifkin, 2013). Perhaps it is why couples who are not blessed with kids are often sad or depressed. Young children are fantastical thinkers (Weisberga et al., 2013). They are very creative and given the opportunity, they could present answers to life's puzzles in their own way. No doubt, children have sharp memory to recall events and happenings around them. It is even more interesting when the sights and sounds of these happenings relate to their world. This is why nurturing their potential is important to any serious society. No sane culture demeans children. This brings to the fore the saying: "Children are the leaders of tomorrow." This dictum implies that children ought not only to exist but also be given their rightful place in the society. On December 10, 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (United Nations, 2007). The UDHR as promulgated, defended and promoted by the United Nations considers how important children are in the world. This is why the organisation set up bodies like the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Committee on the Rights of the Child to fully harness the potentials of children globally.

All over the world, children are exposed to all forms of conflict such as rape, domestic violence, trafficking, servitude, child labour, commercial sex work and abortion. Sadly, social norms feed on such violence against children. Media experts blame these atrocities on silence of journalists on kids in conflict (Offiong, 2017,p.3). The media has the capacity to change the status quo but apparently, the situation is exacerbating while journalists look the other way. It would be a rhetorical question to ask, have kids in conflict been over-reported? Well, the temptation is to think that reporting children is not newsworthy. For instance, according to the International Center for Assault Prevention (2017), about 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence involving physical contact globally. Child abuse and neglect – particularly sexual abuse – are among the world's most serious concerns, with millions of cases reported to various children's protective service organizations each year. However, most of these abuse cases go underreported – first, because the victims are afraid to tell anyone what has happened to them and second, because adults who observe or suspect the abuse are often confused about how to handle the matter (Ryall, 2016,). The challenge is, from Liberia to Congo, Nigeria to Angola and South Sudan to Mali, children are increasingly violated with little or no news about these injustices being perpetuated on these helpless victims. For instance, the mindless exploitation of children by the Boko Haram sect in Nigeria, who have demonstrated utter disregard for the rudimentary rules of human society (Atuma, 2015) is saddening. The cases of child-suicide bombers in the country vanishes from the media space as soon as it is reported - that is if at all the public gets to know. The failure of the media in making those narratives developing stories which should investigate the motive for such brazenness, the sponsors of such crimes and the effects of both illiteracy and radicalization on children who are used have further made matters worse.

The vulnerability of children makes underreporting of children in conflict a humanitarian crisis. Even where children are reported like some of the rescued Chibok Schoolgirls who were serially raped by members of the dreaded Boko Haram sect, their identities are not hidden which lives them with the physiological torture of low-self-esteem and inability to fully integrate into society because of the fear of stigmatization. Children are deliberate targets. They are often subjected to extreme violence from sexual abuse and forced marriage to kidnappings, slavery and brutal killings apart from being recruited as child soldiers; they have also become weapons used as suicide bombers in the last three years with nearly 100 women and girls been deployed for attacks (Abdu cited in Ojeme, 2016). Conflict robs millions of girls and boys of their childhood (Cappelaere cited in McKernan, 2017). Poverty and the primitive culture of enlisting under-aged children in hawking when they should be in school in the hope that it boosts the economic welfare of the family has contributed to the vulnerability of children to all sorts of abuses. The high cost of education and inability of governments to implement the universal free primary education has also excluded as many as 10.5 million children in Nigeria (Atuma, 2015). Children are combatants in nearly three-quarters of the world's conflicts (Kapla, 2005). UNICEF notes these conflicts expose children to various risks and exacerbates pre-existing vulnerabilities such as forced labour and violence in schools. Each year, hundreds of thousands of children who are recruited and used by armed forces or groups, are raped or sexually violated, killed and maimed or exposed to attacks against schools and hospitals in armed conflicts (United Nations, 2016).

Therefore, the study aims at:

1. Assessing unreported cases of children in conflict around the world;
2. Frowning at the primitive culture of reporting children who are abused without protecting their identity;
3. Provoking the journalists to be diligent in reporting children in conflict;
4. Naming and shamming child-molesters and those who lure children into unwholesome acts which denigrate their dignity and self-esteem;
5. Reappraising the rightful place of children in the world in the light of their fundamental human rights; and
6. Proposing arguments against the motion that kids are not worth reporting.

Because studies have indicated that exposure to weapon violence is higher than the rates of suicidal ideation, sexual victimization, and caregiver maltreatment (Mitchell; Hamby; Turner; Shattuck and Jones, 2015,p.7), this study has give more attention to child soldiers.

Explication of terms**Journalists**

In this paper, we shall understand journalists as all those who are formally or informally trained for the gathering, processing and dissemination of information to large number of audiences through traditional or new media platforms. In modern times, the term journalist is not restricted to professional media practitioners because the advent of smart phones has provided an opportunity for citizen journalists through eyewitness accounts. From the Arab Spring to the agitation for session in Northern Cameroun, Eastern Nigeria and Northeastern Spain, people have demonstrated that change can take place in any society given the huge potentials of the new media (Dyikuk, 2017). Unlike traditional media which was hitherto the exclusive preserve of professional journalists, new media has debuted citizen journalism. This has provided a leeway for everyone who has a smart phone and access to internet to access and share information, to speak and be heard and above all, to participate in governance while being able to correct societal ills. Whether professional or amateur, journalists have a portent tool for social and behavioural change in society. This is why their silence in reporting children in conflict is both saddening and shameful.

Children

Unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger, a child is a person below the age of 18 (Convention on the Rights of a Child, Article 1). This is why the monitoring body for the convention namely the Committee on the Rights of the Child, continually encourages various governments to review the age of majority if it is set below 18 and to increase the level of protection for all children under 18 (United Nations, 2017). In some countries especially in Africa, even young adults who have lightly past 18 years and are in their early 20s are still considered children.

Conflict

Conflict is often defined as the misunderstanding that occurs among people as a result of language barrier, differences, perceived fears, anxieties and unresolved external or internal pressures (Dyikuk, 2017). However, in this study, we shall conceive conflict as all forms of child-abuses ranging from rape to domestic violence, trafficking, servitude, child labour, commercial sex work, abortion, (Offiong, 2017,p.3) recruitment into war, physical and psychological trauma and all other harmful forms of child labour (Jones, Presler-Marshall, Cooke and Akinrimisi, 2012,p.v-vi) or violence committed against children.

Child Conflicts

In the estimation of this study, child conflict involves the abuse of children on the domestic front or using them to make money in local or international markets. Child conflicts involve the physical and mental torture of children by parents, guardians, older siblings or some religious leaders. This takes the form of spanking, exposure to pornography or horror movies, in-house fight between parents or siblings, suffering as a result of single-parenthood or bereavement of both parents. Child conflicts are unwholesome practices which forces children into compromising situations they did not bargain for.

Types of Child Conflicts**Sexual Abuses**

Sexual abuse constitutes the world's most serious concerns, with millions of cases reported to various children's protective service organisations each year (Ryall, 2016; Offiong, 2017,p.3). Castillo (2016) opines that sexual abuse includes: penetration, making a child view sex act, making a child view or show sex organs, inappropriate sexual talk, fondling and oral sex, making children perform a sex act, child prostitution and child pornography. Children who are sexually abused often suffer in silence as the physical and psychological trauma takes its toll on their lives. Studies have shown that serial abusers were themselves victims of abuse (Castillo, 2016).

Domestic violence, servitude, child labour

Young adults undergo different forms of child abuse (Lampinen and Sexton-Radek, 2010). Most of them are made to undergo domestic violence, servitude or child labour (Offiong, 2017). These acts of violence reduce their self-esteem and humanity. This further affects their overall development in the future.

Child soldiers

Thousands of children are given rifles and recruited by armed forces and militia groups around the world as child soldiers (Atuma, 2015; Villiers, 2015; Chigozie, 2017). They are often brainwashed to commit atrocious acts like killing their relations or nieghbours to remain in the system (Chigozie, 2017).

Child trafficking

Child trafficking is an ancient phenomenon which involves the sale of children for pecuniary reasons. While the practice is often blamed on poverty, those who engage in child trafficking are ironically rich which reduces their chances of being caught or prosecuted.

Physical torture

Aside from the sexual of children, thousands of children suffer a lot of physical harm by adults. Sometimes, parents or guardians use sticks to beat their children; some put pepper in their children's eyes or cut their hands with razor. In some African cultures, children accused of witchcraft or wizardry are either killed or thrown in the evil forests where they become meat for vultures and other wild animals. Physical abuse also involves striking, kicking, burning, biting, hair pulling, choking, throwing, whipping or any other action which injures a child (Castillo, 2016).

Psychological torture

Due to the aforementioned assaults on children, kids suffer untold psychological traumatic experiences like loss of memory, hallucination and low-self-esteem. In worse scenarios, children who are abused lose the sense of innocence and decency; their sense of sympathy or empathy is also called to question since some of them grow wild and cruel because of erstwhile hurtful experiences. Armed conflicts have both immediate and longer term devastating effects on children such as physical, psychological and emotional which further lives detrimental impacts on their ability to survive and fully develop (United Nations, 2016).

Possession disputes

According to Isenberg and Jalongo, possession disputes occur when children argue over ownership of a toy or material. This could lead to cries and physical fights with dire consequences.

Power struggle disputes

When children want to be first or force other children to play "their way," power struggle disputes take place (Isenberg and Jalongo, 2006). Power struggle disputes could take the nature of bullying younger children by those who are slightly above them in age and size.

Group-entry disputes

These are conflicts that take place when children try to join the ongoing activity of another group (Isenberg and Jalongo, 2006). This arises due to curiosity, childishness or impatience.

Aggressive play

Aggressive play conflict occurs when violent, boisterous play escalates in intensity and tempers flare leading to frustration (Isenberg and Jalongo, 2006). Most times, aggressive plays lead to physical injury, scars and even death.

Peer and adult disputes

These conflicts happen when children have differences over rules, preferences for games or activities, or initiating or maintaining interactions (Isenberg and Jalongo, 2006). By mimicking older peers, kids sometimes assume roles of father and mother and in the process of socialization thereby lording it over younger children. This brings conflicts.

Theoretical Framework

This study adopts *the source credibility theory* as theoretical framework. Formulated by Hovland, C and Weiss, W in 1951, the theory holds that the perceived credibility of a sender determines how the receiver reacts to the message. It posits that the attitude exhibited by audiences after receiving a message to a large extent depends on how they view the source. This implies that their attitude is dependent on how and what they perceive to be source. The theory has two implications. On the one hand, the source credibility source suggests that when the right source is used to transmit a message, a right reaction is envisaged. On the other hand, when a wrong channel is used, it increases the chances of the message being ineffective (Asemah, 2011).

Asemah, (2011) categorizes this theory into three models. The first category is the factor model which helps to determine the degree to which the receiver judges the source as credible; the second category is the functional model which views credibility as the extent to which a source satisfies the needs of an individual and the constructivist model which analyses what the receiver does with what the source sends. The theory proposes that since there are various media outfits, the journalist should use the appropriate media to disseminate the information to audiences. This framework is apt to the study because the attitude exhibited by children in conflict after they have been coerced, deceived or brainwashed to a large extent depends on how they view the adult who abuses them. Most times, because children are innocent, adults and caregivers whom kids are supposed to look up to, take advantage of their vulnerability, thereby using them as sex slaves, child soldiers, spies, suicide bombers or human shield during conflicts. As against being the right source which should help them realize their full potentials, adults have been found culpable in becoming wrong sources who lure children into all sorts of unwholesome practices.

Child Conflicts: Local and Global Perspectives

Child combatants have been found on battlefields throughout history especially the Hitler Jugend (Hitler Youth) in the closing days of World War II (Kapla, 2005). Worldwide, an estimated number of 230 million children were said to be living in countries affected by armed conflicts (Villiers, 2015). Around 16 million children across the in Middle East are out of school and almost one in five - 28 million now rely on humanitarian relief services due to the adverse effects of war

(McKernan, 2017). In countries like Afghanistan, Myanmar and Yemen, the use of child soldiers is a recurrent decimal. Extremists groups like Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula also reportedly recruit child soldiers (Briggs, 2017). In 2007, UNICEF disclosed that about 250,000 children were active in armed forces across the world. Most of these boys and girls under the age of 18, are today involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide. Out of this number, many are recruited in the Central African region which comprises of Chad, Central African Republic and Sudan (United Nations, 2010). Incidentally, Villiers (2015) gave the estimates as tens of thousands of child soldiers around the world, with 12,000 children as being used by armed forces and groups in South Sudan, and 10,000 recruited in the CAR as at 2014.

Child soldiers who are fighting in at least 14 countries which include: Afghanistan, Burma, Central African Republic, Chad, Colombia; others are, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), India, Iraq, Philippines, Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan, Sudan, Thailand and Yemen (Child Soldiers International, 2017 and Human Rights Watch, 2017). That is not all, according to UNICEF, over 2000 child soldiers, under the age of 18, were recruited and used in combat by the terrorist group, Boko Haram in 2016, 17,000 in South Sudan and 10,000 in the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2013. Nearly 1,500 cases of child recruitment were reported in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015 (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017). Burma is said to have the largest number of child soldiers in the world (Human Rights Watch, 2002). In most African countries, children who are caught in the fire line as child soldiers fall within the age range of 18 and 21 years. These children are forcedly recruited into to the military or militia groups to provide dependable force to the group. It is crucial to note that those who recruit these kids do so in order that the children take part in hostilities, act as spies or messengers and human shields or become propaganda for cheap political gains. With an AK 47 riddle, their recruiters give these minors a false sense of power and authority (Chigozie, 2017).

It is instructive to note that the notorious militia groups which enlists children into the military are: Boko Haram in Nigeria, Al-Shabaab in Somalia and the Lord's Resistance Army in the Central African states of CAR, DRC and South Sudan; others include various rebel groups in the DRC, South Sudan, Sudan and Mali; in the list are, the ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka in the CAR, and government forces from the DRC, Somalia, Sudan and Chad (Villiers, 2014). Writing on *10 shocking facts about child soldiers*, Chigozie (2017) makes a stalling disclosure about child soldiers in Africa in the following way:

Child soldiers are under aged

An estimated number of 200,000 to 300,00 children between eight and eighteen are forcefully recruited as child soldiers in Africa.

Forced labour

Since not all those recruited fight on the battle field, others do menial chores like cooking or act as spies, messengers, courtiers, suicide bombers and cleaners. The girls are used as sex slaves by the male soldiers or married off. They are often forced to go for wars they would rather not go. Child soldiers are often forcibly conscripted through coercion, abduction and threat. Others voluntarily enlist in armed groups (International Committee on the Red Cross, 2017,p.4 and Villiers, 2015).

Sexual molestation

Girls who are recruited are often raped. Most child soldiers are boys but the girls who constitute about 40% are either vulnerable to sexual abuse by male soldiers or forced into sexual slavery (Briggs, 2017). Most times, they are married to male commanders or raped.

Lack of basic needs

Children are forced into the military because they can easily be manipulated, they are too young to resist the commanders, most of them are from poor homes, they eat less than adult soldiers, their sense of danger is not fully developed, they have no access to education and most of them are separated from their families (International Committee on the Red Cross, 2017,p.4) or are displaced.

Social and Economic Pressure

Many children are forced to join the military due to social and economic pressure like lack of money, food and security. Most recruiters strip the community supplies by denying child-soldiers economic and social rights in order to get their loyalty. Often times, children present themselves to join armed groups in a desperate attempt to survive and escape poverty and insecurity (Villiers, 2015).

Many African countries recruit children in the military

In African countries like Somalia, Congo, Nigeria, Liberia, Mozambique, Uganda, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Libya and Mali, children are recruited as soldiers.

Contribution of technology

Improvement in technology has made it possible for small arms to be produced which can easily be handled by both children and adults. This has contributed to the recruitment of child soldiers globally.

Forceful committing of atrocities against relations

Rebels usually brainwash children to kill their family members, relations or neighbours so that these child soldiers will have no chance of returning home. Since this brings about stigmatization, the child is unable to leave the group or think of escaping since he or she has nowhere to go.

Child soldiers are part of rebel groups

Many countries in Africa where rebels operate do not have a functional government. As such, many rebel groups are anti-government who are not willing to negotiate with a functioning government. Since 1998, an estimated number of over one hundred thousand child soldiers are said to have been reintegrated back to their families after being released from the rebels. Non-Governmental Organisations like the War Child and Child Soldiers International facilitated the reintegration of these child soldiers into their societies.

Lack of rehabilitation programmes

While some countries have tried in rehabilitating former child soldiers and giving them access to education, some erstwhile child soldiers do not have that opportunity which poses a risk of their readiness to go back to the military.

Lack of data and research

Because of the dearth of data and research, most times, the number of children recruited within the command structures of armed forces or armed groups are based on estimates per geographic location (Sesay cited in, Villiers, 2015). For instance, according to Nigeria Watch Project, in North-Eastern Nigeria, the Boko Haram members apparently attacked more civilians than the army: "Most of the victims (13,904) were civilians, including 25 foreigners and 582 women and children. During the same period, the security forces killed 'only' 1,309 civilians, including 96 women and 31 children, while 1,445 casualties could not be identified" (Nigeria Watch Project: Sixth Report on Violence, 2016,p.12). Out of the over 1.8 million people displaced in Nigeria, there were more than 1 million children while 220,304 were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries (United Nations, 2016).

In a data released by the UN, 278 children (143 boys and 135 girls) were recruited and used by Boko Haram (225) and the Civilian Joint Task Force (53). The statistics also disclosed that of the 21 girls who were used as suicide bombers by Boko Haram, only 11 were documented in the fourth quarter. The reports revealed that although children were also used for suicide attacks in Cameroon and Chad, only in early 2016 were these cases reported. Out of the 1,010 children (422 boys and 588 girls) which were seen or rescued during military operations in North-Eastern Nigeria, Boko Haram had recruited and used 204 (117 girls and 87 boys). The organisation alleged that children were used by the Civilian Joint Task Force to man checkpoints and also act as messengers and spies (United Nations, 2016). Cases of 129 children detained for alleged association with Boko Haram were documented (69 boys and 60 girls), including 85 held in military barracks in Maiduguri, 22 at the Aguata camp in eastern Nigeria by the Office of the National Security Adviser, after passing through the Chad security corridor, and 21 girls in Lagos detained by the Nigeria Department of State Services and the Nigerian security forces. On 1 December, an 11-year-old boy was reportedly arrested in Maiduguri for being a suspected "Boko Haram terrorist", and his picture displayed on posters disseminated throughout Nigeria. The poster appeared to include at least three other boys. In November, the Nigerian security forces handed over to the Governor of Borno State 48 boys and 10 girls who had been in military detention in Maiduguri since August for alleged association with Boko Haram (United Nations, 2016).

This allegation coincides with a 2016 report on children and armed conflict, in which the Secretary-General of the United Nations stated: "I am concerned by the number of children recruited and used by the Civilian Joint Task Force and I call upon the Government to take swift action to prevent further cases" (United Nations, 2016). Accordingly, the report gave the parties to the violation against children in Nigeria to include: Civilian Joint Task Force, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'awati wal-Jihad, also known as Boko Harama, those who recruit and use children, those who kill and maim children, those who engage in attacks on schools and/or hospitals and those who abduct children (United Nations, 2016). However, the Nigerian government has faulted certain aspects of the 2015 Child Labour Report which accused it of employing child soldiers in its fight against Boko Haram (Ngige cited in, Atuma, 2015). The UN had verified the killing of 244 children (109 boys and 135 girls), mostly in Borno (130), Adamawa (54) and Yobe (48). The International Organisation noted that sixty-five of these children died in 13 suicide attacks while 112 (54 boys and 58 girls) were maimed (United Nations, 2016). As part of events to mark the 2016 Day of the African Child, the Country Director, Plan International Nigeria, Dr. Hussein Abdu disclosed that over 20,000 children had been killed, 2.2 million displaced and 2.7 million in need of protection services in the country. He also noted that 1 million children need access to education because 19,000 teachers have been displaced. He further stated that in Borno State alone, over 300 schools have been reported damaged or destroyed and at least 196 teachers and 314 school children were killed from 2012 to 2014 December (Ojeme, 2016).

Out of 253 children (84 boys and 169 girls) who were encountered during military operations in a facility in Nigeria, four girls were pregnant as a result of sexual violence during their captivity - all the 68 mothers of the 112 children under 5 years were either raped or were wives of Boko Haram members. Although the facility has been closed down, it is not clear whether the women and children have been reunited with their families. More so, because an estimated number of 1,500 schools were destroyed in north-eastern Nigeria since 2014, over 400,000 children have no access to education (United Nations, 2016). Out of the 162 documented cases of the abduction of children by members of Boko Haram, the UN only verified 26 which constitutes 15 boys and 11 girls. Also, out of 693 children who were abducted by the members of the sect, 327 were boys and 366 girls. It is not clear if the over 200 Chibok schoolgirls who were kidnapped in 2014 were among

those rescued (United Nations, 2016). In countries such as the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan, 15 million were caught up in violent conflicts, hundreds were kidnapped and tens of thousands were recruited or used by government forces and armed groups. In 2014, the United Nations listed 29 parties in seven African countries that recruited and used children in armed conflicts (Villiers, 2015). It has been established that the devastating impacts of conflicts such as family separation, the loss of loved ones and forced dislocation which causes severe distress has affected the psychological well-being of millions of children (United Nations, 2016).

How Children first come in contact with journalism

This study cannot be complete without having an idea about how children first come into contact with news or journalism. We shall attempt six points to buttress this:

Children are curious about what happens around them

Citizen journalism has enabled any curious about what happens around him or her to be regarded as a journalist. In this sense, children first come in contact with journalism as young as their cognitive senses are curious enough to ask questions about what is happening in their environment – after all, the hallmark of journalism is investigation. Children like to ask, inquire or investigate “how” and “why” Mum or Dad did this or that. This is their first contact with the profession although remotely.

They hardly forget news that interests them

Smart children don't forget easily any interesting story they hear which relates to them. As active watchers of cartoon, children who watched Tom and Jerry would hardly forget the gist of that series. This prepares them for any journalistic prowess in the story since journalism deals with storytelling – as it were, storytelling would be sterile without retention.

They are good listeners and story tellers

There is mistaken the fact that children are good listeners and good story teller. Telling a child, a lie is a waste of time because that child is like to remember verbatim what you told him or her. As such, their first contact with journalism is during the lullabies or tales-by-the-moonlight on the home-front. Many a seasoned journalist today were good listeners or story tellers back in the days. Tahmina's thoughts are important to this summation about children's first contact with journalism. The scholar suggests that children first come in contact with journalism in the following ways:

Children are involved in the news

In many instances children are directly involved with the news. In these cases journalists need to think about how they will project children featured in the news and how the news will impact children. Journalists must always work to ensure the best interest of children. Media content involving children and children's issues can also influence others in society - the media has an important role in shaping the mindset of readers/audiences and their attitude towards children.

Children watch television and read newspapers

Children are regular viewers of television and readers of newspapers and in this day and age, children also have access to news via the internet. In some cases, an incident may not involve 9 children directly, but the news of the incident could still affect child audiences. Despite this, journalists too often write and/or circulate news without taking their child audience into account.

Children have the right to know

Children have a right to know and, at the same time, they want to present their own opinions about issues that affect them. Journalists must think about how they can incorporate children's voices into their reports. Children have the right to express their views (Tahmina, 2010).

Aside from giving them an opportunity to express themselves, media organisations can provide fora for kids on Children's Day Celebration such *Children's Parliament* where they could broadcast news. Pertaining to the participation of children in the media, the UNESCO Clearing-house's 2001 Yearbook *Outlooks on Children and Media* (cited in United Nations, 2007) states that:

- A strengthened sense of pride, power and self-esteem as a result of feeling their voices are worth listening to, that they are part of their community, and that they have achieved an understanding of others and of their own culture.
- Seeing their own everyday dreams and their own local, social and ethnic culture and reality portrayed in the media.
- Strengthened ability and curiosity and increased media competence (i.e., critical understanding of the media).
- Greater social justice engendered by allowing young people who do not manage well in traditional, print-based schools to take part in audio-visual media production.
- Greater interest and involvement in society on their own terms, which in turn inspires action to improve coverage of youth issues in the media and their own communities.

Silence of journalists in reporting child in conflicts

Not much is written about children in conflict except for the invaluable contributions of international organisations like the UN, International Red Cross et al. The scary data provided by these bodies should have precipitated countless essays on the global abuse of children. Sadly, journalists have been complacent about reporting children in conflict. What could be responsible for the seeming silence of the media on children in conflict? In the estimation of this paper, journalists are silent about children in conflict for the following reasons:

Money is not involved

Judging from the lack of dearth of data about children in conflict, the body language of journalists indicates that children are not worth reporting because money is not involved. There are times that sources may demand huge sums of money to cooperate with journalists in exposing child abusers - where this not given, the cases go unreported.

Challenge of credible sources

This study has established that illiteracy is a big drawback to underreporting children. Most times, parents, guardians or child-handlers find it difficult to cope with the rigorous nature of investigative reporting – some back out half way through the report. Caregivers are often unwilling to disclose victimizations concerning their children, especially child maltreatment (Mitchellet al., 2015). McKenna (2011) makes the point that lack of legal knowledge and uncertainty about what is reportable also constitutes a big challenge in reporting these issues. Sometimes, if the parents or guardians consider the harm to the relationship with the family of the accused followed by the negative consequences for the child and family (McKenna, 2011), they prefer to shelve the case. Journalists are sometimes not too sure of some sources who just scratch the surface of the story and become afraid of providing the remaining part. Therefore, the credibility of sources is a huge challenge to reporting children in conflict.

Risk involved

Child abusers or those who recruit children as soldiers know the repercussion of their actions if they are handed over to security agencies. As such, they live no stone unturned in tracking down journalists who are covering their shady deals. Supposing there are various motivations or insurance covers for journalists who report child abuse cases, some dogged journalists may risk their lived knowing fully well that their families would not be abandoned in the event of attack or death. Journalists have lost their lives and their personal liberty in seeking to expose these kinds of wrongdoing (United Nations, 2007).

Complex nature of the fight

By now it should be clear that child-business is a cartel. The business world is about maximization of profit and elimination of loss. This is why this cartel guides their “business” jealously. Often, high profile people in society are involved in the molestation and sale of children for money or sexual gratification. Sensing that there are too many powerful hands in the deal, many journalists prefer to back out to save their lives, jobs or both. The media which is supposed to carry out the corporate social responsibility of protecting the most vulnerable members of the society is sadly part of the problem. In the coverage of pop music and fashion, the media seemingly is encouraging children to be prematurely sexually active. It is also complicit in news broadcasts and telling the stories of abused and abuse through photographs, documentaries and drama. Instead of being protector, they can themselves become the exploiter by failing to keep children’s rights on the news agenda or giving in to commercial pressures can force media to avoid this responsibility (United Nations, 2007).

Why Children fail to report abuse cases

It is curious to find out why children are afraid to report abuse case. This study shall attempt some answers to “why” kids fail to report adults who abuse them:

- ***Illiteracy:*** Most children are afraid to report abusers or those who recruit them as child soldiers because neither they nor their parents are literate enough to approach security agents to report the affair. Illiteracy here means that the children and their parents have no idea about fundamental human rights and how to defend same.
- ***Poverty:*** Some children know that their family does not have the economic standing to fight child abusers who those who force them into the military. As such, they prefer to suffer in silence. Besides, for child soldiers, since their “new job” provides them with some means of livelihood, reporting means cutting access to food or other “pleasantries.” Girls who are abused are often spoilt with gifts, if they report, it means these gifts will cease.

According to the Association of International Schools in Africa (ASIA), children are often afraid of reporting abuses because of the fear of:

- ***Memory.*** Children often cope with their abuse by pushing it so far back in their minds that they “forget.” To remember means to feel hurt again.
- ***Loss of Love.*** Children often worry that their parents or friends won’t love them once they know about their abuse because now they are “dirty.” This is often because children will take responsibility for their abuse. Children also often fear the separation of their family because of the telling. Offenders work hard to reinforce these feelings in order to keep the child silent.

- **Shame and Guilt.** Children either know or can sense that what happened, especially a sexual experience with an adult, is wrong. By telling someone and acknowledging that this happened, they fear the shame of the abuse. They fear they will get into trouble for telling. Older children will experience more of a sense of guilt than younger children, especially in sexual abuse.
- **Blame.** Children fear that they will be blamed for what happened and in the case of sexual abuse that they somehow wanted it. Adults tend to be believed over the child and offenders often state that the child “asked” for the sexual touch or other abuse.
- **Harm.** Offenders often maintain control over their victims by threatening harm to them or their families if they tell. Children are then burdened with the inappropriate responsibility for keeping their families safe (Ryall, 2016).

Journalistic Guidelines for Reporting Children

Crucial to this study is the guideline for journalists in reporting children. The cliché “ignorance of the law is no excuse for breaking the law” implies that professional journalists cannot pretend not to know the rudiments of reporting children. Since citizen journalism has forcefully found its way in the reporting-radar, we shall consider some of the guidelines for journalists in reporting children.

These are:

Be Accurate and Sensitive

Strive for standards of excellence in terms of accuracy and sensitivity when reporting on issues involving children.

Don't intrude on Children's Media-space

Avoid programming and publication of images which intrude upon the media space of children with information which is damaging to them.

Avoid stereotypes and sensationalism

Avoid the use of stereotypes and sensational presentation to promote journalistic material involving children.

Weigh Child-related Content

Consider carefully the consequences of publication of any material concerning children and always minimize harm to children.

Give Children access to media while protecting their dignity

Guard against visually or otherwise identifying children unless it is demonstrably in the public interest; give children, where possible, the right of access to media to express their own opinions without inducement of any kind.

Always Verify Child-related Content

Ensure independent verification of information provided by children and take special care to ensure that verification takes place without putting child informants at risk.

Do not Sexualize Children

Avoid the use of sexualised images of children.

Consult kids or their Parents/Guardians on Child-content

Use fair, open and straight forward methods for obtaining pictures and, where possible, obtain them with the knowledge and consent of children or a responsible adult, guardian or carer.

Verify the Credentials

Verify the credentials of any organisation purporting to speak for or to represent the interests of children.

Don't give adults Money for Child-content except for the child's interest

Don't make payment to children for material involving the welfare of children or to parents or guardians of children unless it is demonstrably in the interest of the child.

Journalists should Evaluate Child-related content

Journalists should put to critical examination the reports submitted and the claims made by Governments on implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in their respective countries.

Children should be given thorough Media Coverage

Media should not consider and report the conditions of children only as events but should continuously report the process likely to lead or leading to the occurrence of these events (Seoul, 2001).

Child Protection Policy/Act: What has been done

Simply put, child protection addresses every child's right not to be subjected to harm (United Nations, 2007). Enhancing the awareness and of and enforcement of existing child protection frameworks remains a critical first step in promoting a child-friendly protection agenda (Jones, Presler-Marshall, Cooke and Akinrimisi, 2012,p.35). Although the recruitment and use of children by armed groups constitutes one of the "six grave violations" against children identified by the United Nation's Security Council and endorsed by various legal instruments aimed at protecting the rights of children in conflict, the practice is pervasive (Villiers, 2015).

The six grave violations identified and condemned by the UN Security Council which came to lime light as a result of the 1991 first resolution on children and armed conflict include:

- Killing and maiming of children;
- Recruitment or use of children as soldiers;
- Sexual violence against children;
- Abduction of children;
- Attacks against schools or hospitals;
- Denial of humanitarian access for children (United Nations, 2017).

This mandate was borne out of the fact that many children around the world were affected by conflicts. With the creation of the mandate of the Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict in 1996, the UN General Assembly sought a way of promoting the collation of data about children in conflict and also fostering international cooperation to strengthen their protection. As such, these violations were put in place to serve as a basis of gathering information and reporting violations against children (United Nations, 2017). This brings us to the issue of the content and implementation of Child Protection Policies globally. First, we shall access the ideal-content of the Child Protection Policy.

For the records, every Child Protection Policy should address the following essential components:

- Recognizing, responding to, and reporting allegations and suspicions of child abuse and neglect;
- Screening and selecting staff, faculty, and volunteers;
- Training and education about child sexual abuse prevention;
- A Code of Conduct that guides interactions between adults and children;
- Ensuring safe environments and practices and connecting to local authority and resources (Ryall ed. 2016).

To end child soldier recruitment globally, the Paris Agreement which was adopted 10 years ago to assist the release of child soldiers and other vulnerable children affected by armed conflicts, laid down principles and guidelines for protecting kids from recruitment and use by armed forces or militia groups so as to ensure their reintegration (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017).

The increase of 58 countries in 2007 to 105 at present signals increased global commitment to end the use of children in conflict in the world. More than 65,000 children around the world are said to be released from armed forces and armed groups, including 20,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo; about 9,000 in the Central African Republic and over 1,600 children in Chad (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017).

The *Children, Not Soldiers* is not left out in the struggle to end child conflicts in the world - The key achievements of the *Children, Not Soldiers* campaign which was jointly launched by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF in March 2014 includes:

- The Armed Forces of Chad were delisted from the annexes of the 2014 report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on Children and Armed Conflict.
- In Afghanistan, the Government in early August endorsed a 15-point road map toward compliance that will aid the implementation of the action plan.
- In Myanmar, the Tatmadaw has released another 91 children as part of a mechanism through which cases are reported to the government for follow up. The government will soon be undertaking a review of the action plan with the UN in order to develop a work plan toward compliance.
- In May, the Government of Yemen signed an action plan with the UN to end the recruitment and use of children.
- In June, the Government of South Sudan recommitted itself to implementation of the action plan.
- In August, Government of South Sudan endorsed a work plan for ending grave violations against children, following a workshop with key stakeholders from the Government and International Community.
- In the DRC, the Government appointed a Presidential Adviser on Sexual Violence and Child Recruitment.

- During a special session on children during the meeting of the African Union Peace and Security Council, the AU agreed to cooperate with the SRSR CAAC to strengthen child protection within the AU with the support of UNICEF (United Nations, 2016).

International law prohibits government forces or armed groups from recruiting children under the age of fifteen (Human Rights Watch, 2002). This is why the legal frameworks which cover humanitarian and international human right laws are germane to this discussion. This is because they give a bite to the fight against the global abuse of children. The international legal instruments, humanitarian and human rights law surrounding violations against children include:

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966);
- The Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I) (1977), the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Relating to the Protection of Victims of Non-International Armed Conflicts (Protocol II) (1977);
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography;
- The Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (1998); and
- Customary international humanitarian law (Security Council Report, 2012).

In order to further boost the crusade against using children for conflicts in world, the Save the Children was born in 2010. The organisation laid the framework for tackling both the immediate and root causes of recruiting children on the local, national and international levels. In the guidelines it came out with, the group stressed that frontal action be taken to end impunity for perpetrators. It also advocated availability of sustainable economic, educational and other great opportunities for children in conflict through creation of awareness about such risks in order to ensure community-based protection mechanisms for them. It called on donors, national governments and the international community to ensure that children are release from military service at the slightest opportunity but cautioned that their release must not be dependent on a peace process or on adult demobilization noting that children's demobilization is of utmost priority at all times and resources should be provided to facilitate this.

The organisation warned against targeting children who were associated with armed forces and groups as this could create resentment and stigma in their communities as they could be seen as perpetrators of violence. It advocated reintegration programmes founded on inclusive community-based approaches which helps children affected by all kinds of conflicts. In particular, those working with children associated with armed forces and groups were urged to ensure that resources and support reach children carrying out other tasks not only those carrying weapons or who were directly involved in hostilities. To curb the menace, special attention, recognition, protection and support must be channeled to young mothers and their children, who are involved in armed groups and forces. The body noted that that reintegration should not be a short-term activity but should be recognized in funding mechanisms which provide funding for five years or more combined with peace-building, recovery, reconciliation and reconstruction programmes (Save the Children, 2010). By working in 158 countries and territories, UNICEF has distinguished itself as a key player in ensuring preventative measures against the abuse and exploitation of children by supporting governments to create a protective environment for all children. In this regard it also gives special protection for the most disadvantaged children who are victims of war, disasters, extreme poverty, violence and exploitation, and children with disabilities (United Nations, 2005). However, more can still be done by other organisations.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Since the world is saturated with the sights and sounds of violence which affect children, the onus lies on the United Nations, Governments all over the world, the media, corporate bodies and spirited individuals to ensure the following: Ending the use of children in conflict requires an integrated multi-sectoral approach which encompasses social welfare, education, health, law enforcement and justice-related interventions. Global and regional campaigns aimed at reaching out to UN member states and Non-Governmental Organisations to mobilize support and employ expertise, advocacy and funding (United Nations, 2016) would also help in reducing the abuse of children. "Failure to protect children undermines national development and has costs and negative effects that continue beyond childhood into the individual's adult life" (United Nations, 2007). Every country should ensure the enactment of the Child Protection Act or Policy in line with acceptable international best practices as promulgated by the United Nations to safeguard the rights of children in flash points of the world. The inclusion of dedicated child protection capacity to investigate grave violations committed against children (Channels Television, 2016) is highly recommended. Since children are the worst victims of all violence, education is key in changing the status quo. All governments especially in developing countries must make concerted efforts at implementing the universal free primary education as well as re-enlisting all the children outside the school system at the primary level (Atuma, 2015). The survival of education any nation depends on the education of the young. As such children must be given quality education as a requisite for helping them to reach their potentials. Rather allowing them to loiter on the streets hawking, children must be educated. "If children are not explicitly given this information and have to construct it themselves, they might be more biased towards an empirical-based response, which would require them to focus only on what is possible and in the realm of their everyday experiences" (Weisberga et al, 2013). It is crucial to canvass for increased resources to

help reintegrate and educate children who have been released especially internally displaced children, child refugees and migrants (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017). The United Nations and governments everywhere must activate the bottom of investigation and prosecution of child abusers. The world must not watch while senseless people engage kids as child-soldiers. Those responsible must be held accountable by naming and shaming (Security Council Report, 2012) child-molesters and all those who lure children into unwholesome acts which denigrate their dignity and self-esteem. Naming and shaming includes showing which state armed forces and non-state armed groups recruit and use children by enlisting all those countries or actors on the list of shame” (Child Soldiers International, 2017). In line with the demands of their fundamental human rights, children must be listened to. Giving them a chance to tell their stories provides them a sense of importance to contribute their quota to the development of every society. If guns must be silenced by 2020, as set in the African Union Commission Agenda 2063, it is crucial and urgent for leaders to listen to the voices of the youth and also recognize their role to take their responsibility (Zuma, cited in Ojeme, 2016). Studies have shown that more children demonstrate a level of critical understanding in relation to different sources of online information (OFCOM, 2014). Therefore, it is important for journalists to give children right access to the media to express their own opinions without any kind of inducement. This involves safeguarding their identity except it is demonstrably in the interest of the public. This requires objectivity in the advancement of a truthful and peaceful society. Both local and internal media outfits must ensure fairness in their reportage. As a matter of fact, journalists and media organisations should strive to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct in reporting children's affairs (United Nations, 2007). Since majority of parents have rules concerning their children's use of media (OFCOM, 2014), this regulatory gesture must be reinforced. The onus lies on players in the local and international media to ensure that children who give information are not exposed. Also, child-related contents must be independent verified according to international best practices before being aired to the general public. For conflicts like possession, power struggle, group entry, aggressive play and peer and adult disputes, Isenberg and Jalongo (2006) proposes redirecting children's behaviour, reassuring kids of their turn, helping them to get along with others, establishing caring classrooms and provision of opportunities for peers as well as model constructive ways of dealing with conflicts and problems as appropriate strategies. UN has a responsibility to proscribe the use of school facilities by military operatives during conflicts. In this regard, the Safe Schools Declaration, endorsed by various governments, which provides guidelines for protecting schools and universities from military use during armed conflicts (United Nations, 2016 and Human Rights Watch, 2013) is commendable. This is to guard and strengthen the education of the young. Protecting children in situations of armed conflict is both a life-saving measure and a sound investment to reduce the life-long negative impact on children's well-being and future development (United Nations, 2016). Their living conditions must also be improved (International Committee on the Red Cross, 2017). Establishing mediate and long-term measures includes tackling education and healthcare challenges aimed at reintegration. Promoting the protection of children's rights during and after conflict involves the provision of education and healthcare services importance during and after armed conflicts. This is because these facilities help in saving and sustaining the lives of children so as to enjoy economic, cultural and social rights once peace is restored (United Nations, 2016). Ensuring that children who have lost their innocence and dignity as a result of being child soldiers or serially abused in various ways get both spiritual and psychology therapy is necessary. After traumatic experiences such child labour or abuse, it is absolutely important for victims to be helped to develop inner strengths and innate moral frameworks around a robust spirituality so as to gain introspection and reintegrate in a resilient manner (Lampinen and Sexton-Radek, 2010). Religious leaders, psychologists and therapists have a crucial role to play here. From the foregoing, *the source credibility theory* used as theoretical framework has been justified. This is because, the study discovered that young people are often deceived by people who are supposed to take care of them. This is why the illicit attitudes exhibited by children who become sex slaves, child soldiers, spies, suicide bombers or human shield during conflicts is a consequence of what adults tell them and how they view the sources. The paper discovered that most times, adults become wrong sources through which children are caught in-between the fire line on the one hand and becoming sexual perverts on the other.

It behooves organisations like, the World Health Organisation, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Save the Children (Ryall, 2016,p.64) to take proactive measures in tackling the menace of over or underreporting children in conflict. Reporting cases of torture or other forms of violence against children in line with relevant procedures (United Nations, 2005) is equally crucial. NGOs like the War Child and Child Soldiers International ought to live up to their responsibilities of reintegrating not only child soldiers but all vulnerable children back to their societies. Various international groups such as the Child Soldiers International, War Child and the International Rescue Committee, (Villiers, 2014) ought to work hard to eliminate all forms of the use of child soldiers and damage of children. It is the responsibility of the UN's Optional Protocol on Children in Armed Conflict to forbid non-state armed groups from recruiting or using children under the age of 18 as child soldiers (Villiers, 2014). People should be willing to offer their support by taking a stand against the use of child soldiers not in Africa alone but throughout the world. It is obvious that this can only be achieved through making and enforcing laws which stand against recruitment of child soldiers (Chigozie, 2017) and molestation of children in whichever way. It is high time that the Rome Statute, which created the International Criminal Court (ICC) and entered into force in 2002 be invoked since it sets another benchmark for criminalizing the conscription or enlistment of children under 15 into hostilities (Villiers, 2014). What the world need is more support for initiatives and programmes which have a direct impact in the lives of children (United Nations, 2016). So long as kids are still affected by conflict, the world cannot give up fighting for their cause (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017) – Journalists who by their calling are critical stakeholders in the world cannot do less.

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Tables

Table 1: Types, Possible Causes, Effects and Remedies of Global Child Conflicts

Types of Child Conflicts	Possible Causes	Possible Effects	Possible Remedies
1. Child soldiers, child labour, slavery and caregiver maltreatment	Poverty, illiteracy and lack of growing in a family where children are shown love, appreciated and motivated to grow to their full potentials.	It reduces their self-esteem, humanity and affects their overall development in life.	Ending child molestation and conflicts in the world through enforcing laws which proscribe it and prosecute offenders.
2. Child-suicide bombing, maiming and killing	Ideological or religious sentiments as well as being victims of violence.	It lives their parents and caregivers in trauma.	Discouraging parents and their children from radicalization and being used.
3. Rape, commercial sex work or child prostitution, abduction and forced marriage as well as child pornography	Conflicts, wars, poverty and illiteracy.	This makes kids sexual molesters themselves with physiological and psychological imbalance or trauma.	Prosecution of those who abuse children as well as those who expose them to pornography.
4. Trafficking and abortion	Greed and poverty	While trafficking could make children lose confidence in themselves, abortion could make them childless in the future or guilt-ridden.	Ensuring justice for abuse victims and rehabilitating children who have been exposed to the effects of abortion.
5. Domestic violence and servitude	Illiteracy and poverty	It lives kids with bitter experiences and indelible scares.	Enforcing laws which proscribe domestic violence and servitude for children.

Table 2: Curbing the menace of child conflicts: Previous and current scores of Child Conflicts, key actors and what can be done

Previous and Current Scores of Child Conflicts		Key actors in curbing Child Conflicts	What can be done
1.	Burma reportedly has the largest number of child soldiers in the world (Human Rights Watch, 2002).	United Nations	UN funded organisations like the World Health Organisation, Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to mention a few should form a synergy aimed at eradicating child soldiers and other forms of child abuses while encouraging various nations to enforce Child Protection Policies based on international standards.
2.	In 2007, UNICEF disclosed that about 250,000 children were active in armed forces across the world (United Nations, 2010).	Multilateral Groups/Non-Government Organisations	Organisations like International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, International Society for the Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and Save the Children etc, should help in collating data about children in conflict which will in turn help in tracking hot spots in the world where children are abused most so that help can reach them.
3.	Over 2000 child soldiers, under the age of 18, were recruited and used in combat by the terrorist group, Boko Haram in 2016, 17,000 in South Sudan and 10,000 in the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2013. Nearly 1,500 cases of child recruitment were reported in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015 (Lake, cited in, Channels Television, 2017).	Various Governments	Liaising with the UN to bring perpetrators of child molestation or abuse to justice.
4.	There are tens of thousands of child soldiers around the world, with 12,000 children who are used by armed forces and groups in South Sudan, and 10,000 recruited in the CAR as at 2014 Villiers (2015).	Media Organisations and Law Enforcement Agents	Ensuring thorough investigation and prosecution of child-offenders.
5.	In a data released by the UN, 278 children (143 boys and 135 girls) were recruited and used by Boko Haram (225) and the Civilian Joint Task Force (53) in Nigeria (United Nations, 2016).	Religious Bodies/Spirited Individuals	Ensuring a morally sound society and helping parents of victims to get justice.
6.	There are millions of cases of child abuse and neglect, particularly sexual abuse reported to various children’s protective service organizations each year (Ryall, 2016,p.7).	Psychologists, therapists and counsellors	Help victims get psychological, post-traumatic and spiritual counseling aimed at full integration into society.
7.	Out of the over 1.8 million people displaced in Nigeria, there were more than 1 million children while 220,304 were registered as refugees in neighbouring countries (United Nations, 2016).	Parents and Guardians	Providing child-safeguards on the home-front and reporting suspected cases of abuse to law enforcement agents.
8.	About 150 million girls and 73 million boys under the age of 18 have experienced forced sexual intercourse or other forms of sexual violence (International Center for Assault Prevention, 2017). Also, an estimated number of 200,000 to 300,00 children between eight and eighteen are forcefully recruited as child soldiers in Africa (Chigozie, 2017).	Children themselves	Reporting cases of abuse to parents or law enforcement agents so as to get help.