

Time for Action

Protecting and supporting war-affected children



Refugee camp in Thailand



Former child soldier, Uganda



Chechen refugee

The numbers are appalling: Over the last decade, 2 million children were killed in conflicts, over 1 million were orphaned, over 6 million were seriously injured or permanently disabled, and over 10 million suffered grave psychological trauma. Around the world, some 300 000 young persons under the age of 18 are currently being exploited as child soldiers in as many as 30 areas of conflict.

Today, in approximately 50 countries, children are suffering in the midst of armed conflict and its aftermath. Children are being raped, sexually abused and uprooted from their homes. Right now, there are over 20 million children who have been displaced by war within and outside their countries. They account for well over half the world's displaced people.

Children are especially vulnerable when they are deprived of food, sanitation and basic health care—the essentials for survival and healthy growth. Most of them live in extremely deprived and dangerously unsanitary conditions, in communities that are marginalized and economically depressed. They bear deep emotional scars or must cope with lasting trauma. Approximately 800 children are killed or maimed by landmines every month.

This cannot be allowed to continue. Since the World Summit for Children was held in 1990, the United Nations, several countries (including Canada) and non-governmental organizations have sought to draw international attention to the horrendous plight of children affected by armed conflict.

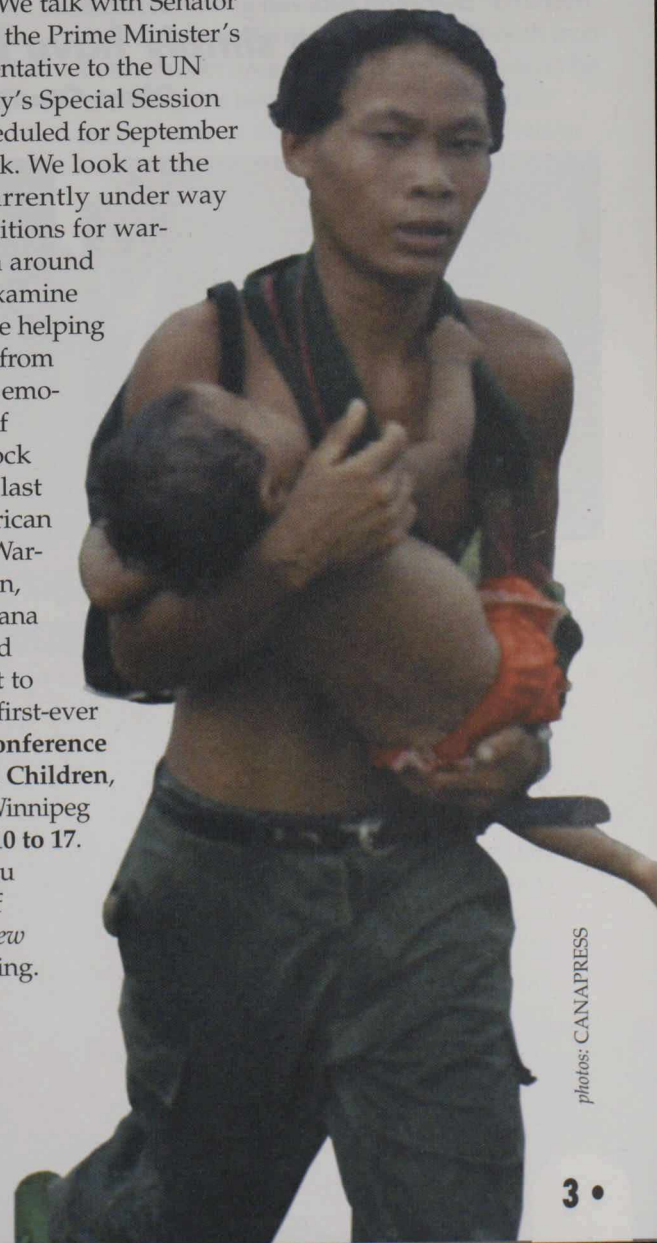
In this issue of *Canada World View*, we examine how the international community, and particularly Canada, has responded and is responding. We look at the root causes of modern conflict, how it affects civilians and children more than ever before, who is acting and what they are doing to help war-affected children, and how we can collectively contribute to the global movement against the exploitation of children in war.

We describe the advocacy work of Olara Otunnu, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children and

Armed Conflict. We talk with Senator Landon Pearson, the Prime Minister's Personal Representative to the UN General Assembly's Special Session on Children, scheduled for September 2001 in New York. We look at the global effort currently under way to improve conditions for war-affected children around the world. We examine initiatives that are helping children recover from the physical and emotional wounds of war. We take stock of the results of last April's West African Conference on War-Affected Children, co-hosted by Ghana and Canada. And we look at what to expect from the first-ever **International Conference on War-Affected Children**, taking place in Winnipeg this **September 10 to 17**.

We hope you find this issue of *Canada World View* thought-provoking.

The Editors



photos: CANAPRESS



The International
Conference on
War-Affected
Children



September 10-17, 2000
Winnipeg, Canada
www.waraffectedchildren.com