

Cooperation of the Government of the Central African Republic and UNICEF in Handling Cases of Recruitment of Child Soldiers in the Central African Republic

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Abstract

Continuous humanitarian crises in the Central African Republic are instigated by the armed conflicts involving underage combatants also known as child soldiers. Set against this phenomenon, the Government of Central African Republic is trying to overcome the issue by initiating collaboration with UNICEF, hoping to put an end to the use and recruitment of said underage soldier operating and fighting throughout the territory of the Central African Republic. The objective of this research is to analyze the existing collaboration between the Republic of Central Africa and UNICEF by firstly, describing the conflict in the Central African Republic and then followed by tabling the factors that enable the recruitment of the children of the war, and as well providing analyses on the UNICEF's role in handling the case of child soldier recruitment and the obstacles that the organization has to endure from its attempt of doing so in the region of Central African Republic. This research employs qualitative method by collecting data from books, NGO's reports, and mass media. The explanation about the collaboration between UNICEF and the Central African Republic is given by utilizing the standpoint of Liberalism together with the perspectives of the concepts of Cooperation and International Organization, respectively. This research concludes that the presence of a number of obstacles in the collaborative work between UNICEF and the Government of Central African Republic has been the primary reason that made the collaboration between the two actors, arguably, has not been entirely and fully successful.

Keywords: Child Soldiers, Central Africa Republic, UNICEF, Cooperation.



A. INTRODUCTION

The Central African Republic is an independent republic on August 13, 1960 from the French state, the Central African Republic is located in the interior of the African continent. The country is bordered directly by the countries of Sudan, Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo and Cameroon. The capital of Central Africa is Bangui, the majority of the population of the Central African Republic live in the western and central regions of the country, especially in and around the capital city of Bangui. The Central African Republic was independent in 1960 from France, but the people themselves were not yet independent because there were still many rebellions and military coups that carried out that hampered the country's progress. The government is quite overwhelmed in handling conflicts that

occur in the territory of its country, from the existence of differences in tribalism, race, religion, and rebel groups that continue to emerge is a fairly difficult solution for the government. In addition, a very serious problem in Central Africa is the number of human rights violations that occur due to past disputes and vengeance between certain groups in Africa, it makes a war that is continuous to the point of affecting their children and grandchildren.

Francois Bozize as President of the Central African Republic now faces an uprising by armed groups and pro-government militias in the Central African Republic who continue to increase efforts to recruit and involve children in their armed conflicts in the Central African Republic. The uprising lasted from 2012 to 2013 between the Government of the Central African Republic and the rebels, some of whom had been involved in the Bush War of the Central African Republic. Tension in Central Africa stopped in 2007, the bushfight, which took place in 2004, stopped in 2007 after the Central African government and rebel groups agreed and signed a peace agreement in Birao, a city in Central Africa. From the agreement or the peace agreement resulted in several points namely the rebel groups agreed to stop carrying out their actions and not take up arms other than that part of the rebel group would be recruited to become a national army in Central Africa, they were allowed to form a legal political party. President Bozize is expected not to run again in the next presidential election, and a reshuffle of the composition of the Central African parliament. After the peace agreement, Seleka stopped the rebellion which ended for some time. Over time, Seleka was not satisfied with the agreement because the Government did not keep the agreement they had made, the rebel group members were not immediately recruited to become part of the Central African military. But in 2012 the Seleka rebel coalition united several rebel groups from the north, the rebel groups united or formed an alliance of the rebel groups UFDR, CPJP, CPSK, FDPC, and FPR, it is known that President François Bozize failed to comply with the peace agreement signed in 2007. Seleka demanding that President Francois Bozize resign and from March 2013, Seleka became the new ruler of Central Africa after his success in displacing Francois Bozize's regime. The problems caused by the rebellion of armed groups and pro-government militias in Africa continue to increase efforts to recruit and involve children in their armed conflicts in the Central African Republic. The government has an important enough role to be able to guarantee a safe and prosperous life for its citizens. The illegal recruitment and use of child soldiers in the ranks of armed groups is a worrying reality for the children of the Central African Republic. African government. In the midst of efforts to collaborate with UNICEF to tackle the case, it is hoped that there will be no more recruitment of children in Central Africa who are child soldiers. Of course it is also the duty and responsibility of UNICEF in dealing with child soldiers in a Central African country which is one of

the world's institutions that fight for children's rights, and is expected to make many changes.

B. DISCUSSION

Armed conflict must be avoided by every individual or country because the impact of the conflict will cause great losses, these losses can be material or non material. Armed conflict caused quite a lot of victims not only from the military or army (combatants), but also civil society, including women and children. Women and children often experience acts of terror and violence, women are harassed and made into sex slaves besides these children are also recruited and forced to participate in the battlefield and become objects of acts of violence. The phenomenon of recruiting child soldiers is a result of the conflict in the Central African Republic as an example of transnational crime and forms of human rights violations focused on violations of children's rights. Recruited or used by armed groups will have a lifelong impact on children, for those who survive will be a terrible experience for them, the traumatic aspects of the brutality they witness, and they experience can have profound psychological effects until they are adults. Government troops and rebel soldiers have recruited tens of thousands of children, mostly boys and many girls involved, many of them recruited by force, taken from the streets or even from schools and orphanages while others are encouraged to join armed groups out of fear or poverty, children want protection from violence around them. Boys are made as coolies or as messengers while girls are given envoys to prepare food or care for injured people, although they are also forced to become sex slaves with other more mature soldiers, in addition they are still forced to plunge into the field war. Some are even forced to commit cruelty to their own families as a way to sever all ties with their communities.

In countries that are often involved in conflicts that will automatically affect their communities both women and children, the most important factor in recruiting child soldiers is the powerlessness of the government and the military in overcoming conflicts that were initially small to become major conflicts that consume many casualties, so children are also forced to participate in armed conflict activities. Many conflicting groups or government militias who are in conflict involve children in war, children are recruited with various factors that influence the recruitment of children into armed groups, many children who join to get money, as a reason to stay alive, or power. The lure of the economy applied by armed groups to continue to influence children so that these children still want to be in groups. Children who participate in armed conflicts often die or get injured in battles. If not, then they are forced to carry out dangerous tasks such as preparing landmines and explosives. Men and women in war live in miserable conditions, at provide food but do not have access to health

services. In most cases they are treated cruelly, they are beaten and insulted so they can submit to the leader. If they make mistakes, the punishment that comes is very harsh or even threatens their lives. The decision to participate in armed conflict is often determined by the socio-economic structure and structure of society and families that have been destroyed due to armed conflict situations. Poverty and lack of access to education or employment are the most important factors that allow many young people to join the armed forces. Girls do not look for ways to avenge and bring harm to those who have been used by armed groups. They are only looking for ways to contribute, to do something meaningful that is productive with their lives. While what is commonly seen is boys holding from AK-47s, while girls who are behind the line and in camps they can also be said to be soldiers, they cook or do errands by becoming sex slaves.

International cooperation is needed because basically all countries cannot stand alone where the cooperation aims to achieve mutual prosperity. The intended collaboration is cooperation between countries or non-state organizations. UNICEF and the Government of the Central African Republic are working together to eradicate the recruitment of tetara children in the Central African Republic. UNICEF is an international organization under the United Nations (UN) which has the responsibility of ensuring the welfare of children throughout the world. Seeing the threat posed by the recruitment of child soldiers, UNICEF has made a series of efforts to deal with the case. The Central African Republic cooperates with UNICEF which is an international organization and mutually makes agreements in the process of cooperation between related parties. There are a variety of children's rights that need to be protected and enforced, seeing that many children's rights are ignored and are not heeded anymore, resulting in many violations of the rights to children. The rights of children are 1) Civil rights and freedoms, every child has civil rights and freedoms as adults, for example to have identity and citizenship, the right to freedom of thought, belief and religion, and the right to freedom of expression or expression. However, children do not have political rights, namely the right to vote and be elected in elections or the right to participate in government. Just as children in the Central African Republic do not have the right to civil liberties to think freely according to their age, but in reality they are forced to think in accordance with the wishes of the leaders in armed groups to carry out their orders, that is to plunge into the battlefield. 2) Right to family environment. Is a special human right for children. Adults do not have this right. Means that the child has the right to be cared for by his parents. If the parent is absent or unable to care, the child has the right to have a family or substitute caregiver. The right to the family environment also includes the right of the child to be protected from all forms of violence (physical, mental, sexual, neglect or neglect) by the child's parents or guardians. Children in the Central African Republic do not

have these rights because they are faced with conditions of war and they are not protected by anyone, they are separated from their parents to go into the battlefield, they experienced various forms of violence both physically and mentally, they were forcibly employed and most girls were made sexual slaves, they also experienced neglect and neglect. If children experience violence and neglect, the State is obliged to provide protection to children, but in reality the Central African Republic government is less serious in upholding children's rights in the Central African Republic. 3) Right to basic health and well-being. Children have the right to the highest health standards that can be given, namely prevention of disease, malnutrition and reduction of infant mortality, getting health services including health insurance. Children with disabilities are entitled to special health services so that they can identify with children who are not disabled. The condition of children in the Central African Republic is very sad. The biggest killers for children in the Central African Republic are not bullets but malnutrition, malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhea (<http://tabloidjubi.com>). indeed the situation of children in the Central African Republic is very worrying, the lack of health care causes high mortality rates for residents in the Central African Republic. 4) The right to education, leisure and cultural activities. The right to education, especially basic education, the right to rest, have free time to play and recreation and the right to be actively involved in cultural activities in the community. Children in the Central African Republic have very little education, their right to receive education has been exchanged by the current state of the Central African Republic, they also do not have the right to play and play and are actively involved in the cultural activities of their communities. 5) Right to special protection. There are special protection rights for certain groups of children, including refugee children, children in conflict with the law, or children from minority groups or indigenous peoples. In addition there are also for all children in situations of war or armed disputes, from economic exploitation, from drug abuse, exploitation and sexual violence, from trafficking, kidnapping and trafficking to children, to exploitation in other forms. The situation in the Central African Republic means that the right to special protection cannot be conveyed properly to children in the Te African Republic they were exploited by some rebel groups to go to war, they were employed for the benefit of certain parties, they were also given illegal drugs by rebel groups in the Central African Republic.

The problem of recruiting child soldiers is now an issue that needs serious attention, not only from the government but from the community as well, besides that the state has an obligation to provide protection to children because the crime in recruiting child soldiers is a real threat that can take these rights from the child. The collaboration between the Central African Republic Government and UNICEF was not entirely successful, because there were still recruits of children to become soldiers.

There are several obstacles that cause the cooperation process to not yet be maximally successful, the first obstacle is the lack of trust (ignorance of the track record of others), UNICEF is not convinced of the cooperation between it and the Central African Republic because of the rampant corruption, collusion and nepotism that characterizes the leadership in the Central African Republic. The second obstacle is legal difference. According to UNICEF, the definition of a child soldier is that a child soldier can be interpreted as a boy or girl under 18 years, both of whom directly take the part in armed contact or not directly involved in armed contact such as; cooking, doorman, deliver messages, and anyone accompanying armed groups involved in a conflict, whereas the Geneva Convention in 1994 and the Additional Protocol in 1977 set 15 years as the minimum age limit for joining a armed conflict. Third is an operational obstacle, UNICEF is experiencing difficulties in terms of funding, UNICEF claimed to lack funds in resolving the case and helping the conditions of children in the territory of the Central African Republic, besides that human resources in the Central African Republic are also unable to support cooperation. Central African Republic with UNICEF, the stakeholders in the country have not been able to carry out their duties and responsibilities properly. The fourth obstacle is the ongoing conflict, acts of violence and conflict that continue and continue to occur in the Central African Republic also inhibits the distribution of UNICEF assistance to the population in the Central African Republic. road and transportation infrastructure in the Central African Republic has been damaged, which means that humanitarian assistance to those most in need can be a tremendous challenge, requiring expensive air shipping or can spend days with long distances, insecurity also became an obstacle for the team to access the population that needed it most.

C. CONCLUSION

A very serious problem that occurs in Central Africa is the number of human rights violations that occur due to past disputes and revenge between certain groups in Africa, it makes a war that is continuous to the point of affecting their children and grandchildren. The Central African Republic is beset by ongoing conflicts among the army, national groups and foreign armed groups, which disrupt the environment in which women and children live. Conflict among the army and six armed groups in the Central African Republic has led to a complex and protracted crisis of sustainability. The Central African Republic, has a war journey involving children to take part in action in battle. There are several factors that encourage the recruitment of child soldiers in the Central African Republic, namely the conflict itself that occurred in the Central African Republic was an activity initially carried out by rebels who were dissatisfied with the government's performance. Corruption, collusion and

nepotism that characterize leadership in the Central African Republic make people feel there must be a change in the country. Besides conflict there are also other factors, namely poverty. Central African Republic is included in a weak country because it is unable to guarantee the welfare of its people. Proven in the United Nations Human Development Index, this country is ranked 180 out of 186 countries (UNDP, 2014) which are still below the poverty line, besides that the Central African Republic entered as a failed state when its central government is no longer able to control and oversee the situation of its entire region .

Another factor is politics, the distribution of power is also uneven because many political elites who control the seat of government, groups in the northern regions of the Central African Republic feel their aspirations are not heard by the central government, besides that most Central African leaders commit corruption and enrich themselves. The next factor is education, most children in Africa do not have the education that they should have. Some of them go to work to help their parents, and some others suffer from malnutrition as a result of poverty affecting their families. Education can be one of the factors why poverty in the Central African Republic has not yet ended. Conflict affects the opportunities for children to receive quality education, the government is also weakened, besides the government's difficulty in providing educational facilities, namely schools, especially in remote areas, besides the conflict causes a decrease in the supply of teachers who support education in the country. The Government of the Central African Republic and UNICEF are working together to eradicate the recruitment of tetara children in the Central African Republic. The issue of recruiting child soldiers is now a problem that needs serious attention, not only from the government but also from the community. The state has an obligation to provide protection to children. The crime in the recruitment of child soldiers is a real threat that can take these rights from children. The Government of the Central African Republic endeavors to collaborate with UNICEF to tackle the case so that it is expected that there will be no more recruitment of children in Central Africa who are child soldiers. However, this collaboration did not produce significant results, there are still children involved in armed conflict in the Central African Republic. Obstacles that occur in the collaboration of the Government of the Central African Republic are 1). Minimum Trust (Ignorance of track record of others) 2) Legal differences 3) Minimal funding 4) Human resources and, 5) Prolonged conflict.

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