

# ABOUT WAR

## ***The planes are shooting at the people.***

The people are running into the bushes  
with the children,  
The plane shooting,  
The children shouting,  
The houses destroyed,  
The planes shooting,

## ***The houses burnt – everything burnt.***

The cornfields too.  
The planes shooting, shooting the people,  
Everyone running, fleeing the massacre  
Necks broken,  
Children wounded,

## ***All the cows and horses dead.***

*Memories of War: Refugee girl, Latin America*

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*words, drawings,  
paintings and  
photographs by  
young people living  
in countries where  
there is a war or  
war has recently  
ended.*

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## **My Story**



***We were walking holding hands.*** We were all afraid because the soldiers were chasing us. There were a lot of them. They came up to two children and asked them some questions. And then they killed them and left them. The soldiers were also in the street and they shot at us.

***And we ran, frightened, with my mother*** along a street into some bushes that I didn't know. My mother and I were crying. We were hungry and cold. And from there we saw them dropping bombs from the airplanes.

*Young refugee girl , Central America*



***For those who didn't experience it [Pot Pot Regime in Cambodia] it is very difficult to believe.*** I remember when I would tell people about it afterwards, that they wouldn't believe me. That hurt a lot. Now I know that they didn't want to believe it.

*Survivor of Pol Pot Children's Camp*

What happened to our parents' generation was so much. They experienced so many different regimes, so many political regimes - and the killing, the genocide, so much. And during that time you couldn't trust anyone.

A lot of things are out of control and messy here. Our culture, our morals, our traditions were destroyed. And then there were so many influences - culture from the west, everywhere. And we had no reference points to reject.

For any outsider they can look and see that Cambodia is a beautiful country. They can't see the situation inside. To the outside world we try to show that we are very strong. But can we be that strong? In real life it is different.

*Present-day Cambodian Youth*

## My Story



***In Burma I was never allowed to go to school.*** My parents did not like to send me to school because they needed me to work. Also the school was not in the village and we had to walk a long distance.

We came here to the refugee camp because of the SPDC (Burma Army). They were always asking us to do many things for them. They took all our money. When that was all gone, when they couldn't get anymore money, they started taking our things. They took our chickens and our pigs. They left us nothing. We had a single nothing to feed our stomachs. So we knew that we couldn't stay there any longer.

So I had to leave my village and come here. On the way I met many soldiers. They shot at us. I saw someone die. We had to run. In the night we could not make a fire because we were afraid that the SPDC would see it and kill us again.

*Photo: Karen traditional dance  
Story by Karenni refugee*

## ***My Feelings***



### ***The Colours of My Self Portrait***

On the inside you see the white. It is for the good feelings and that I don't fight with others. The red is for my worries. The black is for my sadness because I don't have my parents - both of them are dead. On the outside of the outline you see some yellow. That is for the help from the NGOs. The other colours are to show my hatred for the SPDC (Burma Military).

# ***My Feelings***



***I have feelings of sadness and feelings of happiness.***

Because when I go out sometimes I think about having fun and then I think of all the dangers around me. The white is for how things are getting better. Like now our family has food to eat and something to use for living. The black is for my fears.

I fear that the wars of the past will come to the present. I am afraid of war. I am afraid of landmines. I am afraid of the wild life that comes to our village when there is a war going on.

## ***The Day I was Abducted***



***I was abducted in the morning.*** I had just finished sweeping the compound for my mother and had gone in the house. The rebels came to the door and ordered me to come out. I said, “No, I won’t.” They said that they would shoot me if I didn’t come. So I went with them.

They made me lead the way. After a while, they asked, “Would you like to go back home?” I said, “Yes, yes I would.” They said, “Okay, then, you can go.”



So I started to walk away, just slowly like that. But then they yelled at me and pointed their guns at me. They said, “We’ve changed our minds, you have to come back.” They beat me with sticks for not wanting to be a soldier. Then one of them put his gun barrel on my stomach. He ordered me to pull the trigger. I was the most scared. But the commander shouted, “No, stop, stop we will keep him. He will be our soldier.”

*Former child soldier, Northern Uganda*

# Anxiety

*I was in the bush three years with the rebels.* After I was trained to become a soldier, I was given a gun. I was taken for fighting, fighting, fighting, fighting.

And many people died, many people died.





***My Soldier Husband***

When you first arrive [after being abducted by the rebels], they put all the girls together. Then they call the officers so they can pick who they want for a wife. Even if you are very young.

I was given to a very big man. He was blind on one side. So maybe he didn't see that I was very young.



***My Soldier Husband***

This is a picture of the man who was my husband. [Girls are given as “wives” to the rebel officers. ]

It is the face of death.

# Fear

When we try to flee from the rebels, we have **fear**. **Fear** that you might meet with the rebels and they will catch you and punish you, maybe kill you.

## *And fear.*

Those in Sudan have **fear** of the SPLA and **fear** of the civilians around, that they will kill you. And also we have **fear**, **fear** of the government soldiers, because we are told that the government soldiers will kill you.



## *And fear in your heart.*

When you are sleeping. Sometimes dreams of dead bodies. Waking up shouting.

“Sometimes I would see this light as if it is inside me, as if this is happening to me.”

And some girls were speaking things which nobody could understand. Some would start crying and saying “Why are you killing me? You’re killing me for nothing, killing me for nothing!” And when you asked the person she could not explain.

*So that fear is always there.*

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## ***Death walks swiftly***

YOUTH: If death enters my house

***CHORUS: Throw yourself out the window***

YOUTH: If I leave but he follows me

***CHORUS: Run to the river and throw yourself in.***

YOUTH: If I meet up with Death

***CHORUS: What a fear! What a horror!***

YOUTH: I will tell Death that I am at the other corner.

***CHORUS: Already killed....Already dead...***

YOUTH: So death can't find me

***CHORUS: But death is hiding,  
Death is looking for you.***

YOUTH: If death asks for me

***ALL: Say: " I don't know him. I don't know him,  
I don't know him."***

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*Excerpt of play created by displaced youth, Colombia*

# Trapped



- *We live in a country where its hard for someone who has been displaced to get acceptance.* People don't understand what it is like to have somebody tell you to leave your place or you will be killed and then to arrive in a town where you don't know anybody and just to be there, all by yourself, no firend. They don't understand that if this happens, you get down, you get depressed. You lose hope.

- After 9 pm no one can be on the street. They can kill you. They call it "social cleaning." They don't like to see people with strange hairstyles and funny clothes. Last time, they came and got me. It was because I have an African hairstlye. They beat me in the head so much that I had to go to the hospital. 15 stitches.

*Testimonies from two displaced youth from Colombia*

# Memories of the Genocide



The man in this picture is like you and me. Except he kills, he kills people with the machete he has in his hand. You can see that next to him there is a bird. The bird is pleading with him, saying, "Don't kill, don't kill the baby."

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*It began on April 1994.*

Burning houses,  
Killing Tutsis, Tutsis,  
From every place and everywhere.

Blood spreading over the hills.  
People fleeing:  
In the hills, in the valleys, in the churches.

And they were shouting:  
"Kill more, kill more"  
"Kill the cockroaches."

Machetes, spears, knives,  
clubs with nails, anything.  
People killed in the wildest way.  
Children, parents, old people.

And the world was just looking.

They urged the killers, saying,  
"Don't worry. It is only a Tutsi  
Their God has deserted them.  
Their God is dead."

*Youth Collective Poem,  
Nyamata, Rwanda*

# Sadness



***The black all around me is the darkness of war.***

The red is the blood of my family, because my family were killed in the genocide. The green is for peace. The white is the space between me and the darkness, it is for hope. Because still the darkness surrounds me.

# Hope



***The red is for the blood of my family*** because my parents were killed in the genocide. The grey around me is to show that things are a little better than they were before. The green on my neck and my mouth is to show that I can still think and say good things even if my life is difficult.

# Hope



***“I want people in the world to know that they should not give up on us, Here in Uganda maybe the situation is not good. Many people have been killed. But they should not give up on us. “***

## ***About Peace***

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***“Peace is to live with dreams for dignity  
and to have the possibility to dream.”***

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