

WHY WOULD THE ARMY WANT TO RECRUIT YOUR 13 YEAR OLD DAUGHTER? TO RAPE HER, OF COURSE.



No, it's not the British army. It's the Lord's Resistance Army, a group of rebel forces operating in northern Uganda.

And it's not your daughter they want. It's the daughters and sons of the people who live there.

The LRA are very selective in their recruiting strategy.

They prefer children between the ages of 13 and 16.

Any younger, and they are not strong enough to carry heavy loads.

Any older, and they are not malleable enough to obey the will of the soldiers.

Right now, as you read this, girls and boys are being abducted from their homes, their schools, their playgrounds.

In the last 3 years, some 8,000 children have been taken.

Often, they are torn from the arms of their mothers, who themselves may be raped, beaten or even killed.

TO WALK THEM TO MY HOME BUT I WAS REFUSING. WE WENT THERE AND COLLECTED MY CLOTHES. THERE, THEY KILLED MY MOTHER." A 14 year-old girl taken in February 1997.

The girls are selected for their "beauty" and are routinely raped.

Both boys and girls are regularly beaten if they fail to follow orders.

Many are killed.

Sometimes, the children are forced to beat their friends to death.

"THE BOY WAS TOLD TO HIT OYET ONCE. THEN HE WAS TOLD TO HAND OVER THE AXE TO ANOTHER BOY WHO HIT OYET A SECOND TIME. AND THEN I WAS GIVEN THE AXE." A 15 year-old boy who was forced to deliver the axe blow which killed Oyet, a boy he knew.

For the children, it is a living hell. For their families, it causes anguish beyond imagining.

Ugandan mothers and fathers love

their sons and daughters as deeply as you love your own children.

Ugandan children are as vulnerable as any child.

They may live in another country, another world, but they feel the same emotions as you do. Love. Fear. Pain.

You may also feel compassion. But compassion is not enough.

Amnesty International is lobbying the international community to end the abuse of children in armed conflict.

Not just in Uganda, but in many other countries around the world.

(It is estimated that 250,000 children under the age of eighteen are made to fight in Government forces or armed opposition groups.)

At Amnesty, we have energy and commitment in abundance. What we are short of is money.

If you'd like to help us protect the rights of those who cannot protect themselves, please send the coupon.

You don't have to join us, you can just make a donation.

Please do it today. For many children, tomorrow will be too late.

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