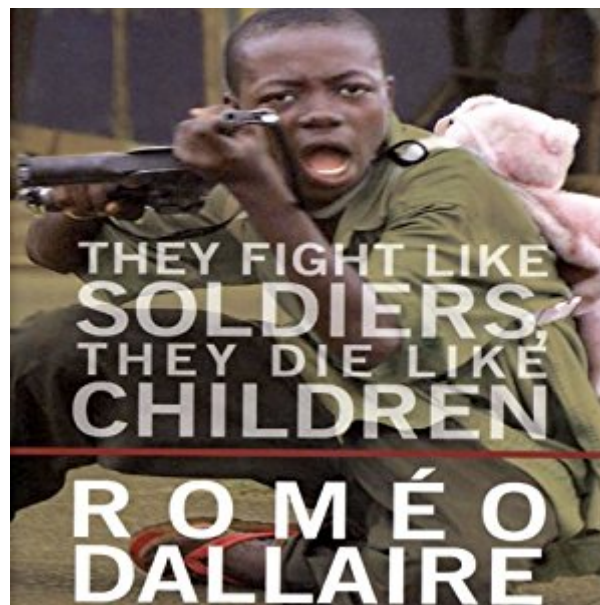




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# They Fight Like Soldiers, They Die Like Children: The Global Quest To Eradicate The Use Of Child Soldiers



## Synopsis

As the leader of the ill-fated United Nations peacekeeping force in Rwanda, Lieutenant-General Romo Dallaire came face-to-face with the horrifying reality of child soldiers during the genocide of 1994. Since then the incidence of child soldiers has proliferated in conflicts around the world: they are cheap, plentiful, expendable, with an incredible capacity, once drugged and brainwashed, for both loyalty and barbarism. The dilemma of the adult soldier who faces them is poignantly expressed in this book's title: when children are shooting at you, they are soldiers, but as soon as they are wounded or killed, they are children once again. Believing that not one of us should tolerate a child being used in this fashion, Dallaire has made it his mission to end the use of child soldiers. Where Ishmael Beah's *A Long Way Gone* gave us wrenching testimony of the devastating experience of being a child soldier, Dallaire offers intellectually daring and enlightened approaches to the child soldier phenomenon, and insightful, empowering solutions to eradicate it.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I empathize with some of the three-star reviewers. Dallaire's book shifts focus several times: from his experiences, to an (imaginary) child's point of view, to a clear-eyed look at the problem, to some of his work to fight the problem -- which is open-ended because nobody has come close to solving the problem of child soldiers. Specifically, it's a bit confusing whether the part told from a child's view is a real history of a specific person; or a composite history; or a gedanken story. Nevertheless, I'm giving this book five stars. A book is about something. This book is about child soldiers in the Great Lakes region of Central Africa and other African countries. Dallaire has served in UN forces

in this area and has experiences with child soldiers on and off the battlefield. So, even though the style falls short in my eyes, there is plenty of substance -- easily worth one's time and attention.

LTGEN (Ret'd) Romeo Dallaire has written a thought provoking and confronting book on the subject of the use of child soldiers by many non-state actors around the world. This book explores the widespread use of child soldiers, their recruitment, exploitation and the myriad of legal, moral and psychological consequences of that exploitation. In the beginning, the author examines his own youth and transition from boyhood to adolescent through to his cadet ship and graduation into the Canadian military as an example of his moral and psychological development and experiences in life. To contrast that transition through life, he then visits the experiences of boys and girls who are often forcibly taken from their families to become child soldiers and the distortion of their childhood into a horrific journey through drug induced rituals and murder to being trained to become a killing machine. Dallaire uses the term 'weapons system' to describe these children when they emerge to undertake their work. In his book he examines how children are 'recruited' or more correctly, forced, into becoming a child soldier; their training and their experiences as a child soldier. He also then takes the reader through how to 'unmake' these children that do survive and are either captured or manage to escape with their lives and emerge into a civilised society. The author then relates his own experiences with child soldiers when he was appointed as the UN Force Commander of UNAMIR-the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda-just prior to the Rwandan genocide and his subsequent work with the Child Soldier Initiative in his native Canada. Gen Dallaire does not pull any punches in his book as he talks about the experiences and atrocities that these child soldiers commit on hapless communities in various parts of the world and their psychological end state after such experiences. It is real 'in your face' stuff. I was drawn to this book as it addresses a number of very confronting issues that the world must consider, together also those countries that undertake peacekeeping operations around the world. The questions raised are many, including the subject of shooting these children in combat situations and the likely fall out on peacekeepers who are confronted with killing what they thought was an adult combatant, only to discover they had in fact shot dead a fourteen year old girl dressed to look like a soldier (for example) and also the question of should these children be held accountable for their deeds in legal proceedings such as those undertaken by the ICC-the international criminal court, that prosecutes human rights and war crimes in post conflict situations. The book describes how these children are sometimes forced to kill families and relatives so that they have nothing to return to, if they did escape or survive their ordeal. The reader will also gain an insight into the work of Canada's Child Soldier Initiative as it

attempts to address the issues of eradication of child soldier use and abuse, the DDR reforms addressing child soldiers, the question of peacekeepers facing child soldiers in battle and also the attempts to deconstruct these children and give them a future free from violence, abuse and exploitation. In summary a very thought provoking and confronting book that examines a very real issue of today's world, well worth the read and to those of you that do read it, please consider advancing the cause of eradication and outlawing the use of children as soldiers in any form of conflict. Well done, Romeo Dallaire!

General Dallaire writes in a style that leaves no one indifferent. His powerful examples, his descriptions of the world state, his analysis of delicate issues and his push for actions come from his experience in Rwanda and also from dealing at the international level. A must read to understand the deeply troubling and sad humanitarian problem of child soldiers

I was writing my masters thesis about child soldiers, when I read this book. It really helps to explain the situation for soldiers such as Dallaire and gives a new perspective for those like me, who are interested in learning about the dynamics of child soldiers. Thank you for an amazing book :)

Repetitive.Repetitive.Repetitive.Much less enjoyable (boring, rambling) & less likely to engage the reader than the author's other books regarding the Rwanda genocide & the use of child soldiers in combat.

I have great respect for this man, and his genuine efforts to bring this horrible practice to the attention of the Western world. Unfortunately, we are seeing this situation from our own cultural perspective, not that of numerous other countries, and expecting them to accept our values and morals is perhaps a bit idealistic. Hopefully his voice will be heard, and we cannot but try. S.M.Gent

Its been a while since I last read this book, but I remember feeling that this is a great book. As he said in his title, he wants to stop the use of child soldiers around the world. I love that he wrote the first chapter about his upbringing because this answered a lot of the questions that I had about his childhood and career as a military man. He writes in a way that everyone can easily understand. In a chapter, he writes from a child soldier's perspective and in another chapter he writes from a UN peacekeeper's perspective. Other chapters are wonderful. I enjoyed reading this book. Read it if you care about the well-being of child soldiers. This is definitely highly recommended.

Over four years ago, I read his first book "Shake Hands with the Devil" about his time during the genocide in Rwanda. That book alone has both haunted me and made me a whole person. It has no doubt changed me profoundly. Now with this new book, he uses his experience as a soldier and a humanitarian to writing a case study on the phenomenon of children being used as a weapons system. He goes into great details of how these kids are becoming a handy way for rouge leaders to fight their wars. In the end, he makes the case for these children and how we can all make a difference in these children lives. This is nothing short of a fearless, bold, tragic, and passionate clarion call on behalf of these children may it be child soldiers or war affected children. I urge everyone to read this extraordinary and unforgettable book!

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