
A journalist and UN goodwill ambassador who combats the recruitment of child soldiers, Briggs portrays the tragic lives of children engaged in what no child should be engaged in: armed conflict. Trying to understand why these children are drawn into conflict and what this involvement means for them and their communities, Briggs explores the painful lives of both child soldiers and war-affected children in Rwanda, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Uganda, and Afghanistan. His accounts of these teens' terrible lives are passionate, powerful, and chilling. The involvement of children in combat is neither new nor limited to any country or continent. What is new is the extent and ease with which government armies, guerillas, paramilitary forces, and vigilantes and other nonstate armed groups recruit train, and motivate these children to enter into armed conflicts that they neither adequately understand nor are suited to. The mass production and spread of lighter weapons have made these children more attractive to warlords. Because they are less demanding, more fearless, easier to brainwash, cheaper to maintain, and less capable of understanding the implications of their actions, children are targeted more often and with greater impunity. Even if they survive the war, these children are afflicted by violence, abuse, displacement, and lifelong trauma. Summing Up: Highly recommended. All levels/libraries.

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