



CHILD SOLDIERS & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Justice and Peace Calendar - January February 2018



Who are child soldiers?

Child soldiers are children (individuals under the age of 18) who are used for any military purpose. Some are in their late teens, while others may be as young as four. They are not only boys – many are girls. Some child soldiers are used for fighting – to kill and commit other acts of violence. Others are used as cooks, porters, messengers, informants or spies, or in any other way their commanders want. Child soldiers are often sexually abused.

What can be done? There are three ways to reduce the harm caused to children by military recruitment:

- Campaign to prevent child recruitment (this is the priority of the UK based Child Soldiers International).
- Support reintegration: the return of child soldiers to their families and communities.
- Support efforts that campaign to hold to account those who have used children for military purposes.



Former girl soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo return to education

Reintegration: Children released from military exploitation are typically very vulnerable. Many children re-join an armed group after being rejected by their communities and families upon return home. Girls in particular face strong stigmatisation since they are often perceived as having lost their social 'value' due to their association with an armed group, and their actual or imputed sexual relations with a man outside of marriage. Being accepted by one's family and community is the most important factor in the successful reintegration of children. To achieve this, children need to participate in positive community activities giving them a valued social role, which will enhance their recovery and well-being.

In 2007 the UN proclaimed 20 February as **World Day of Social Justice**, in order to highlight and support efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.

Social justice is an underlying principle for peaceful and prosperous coexistence within and among nations. The UN upholds the principles of social justice by promoting gender equality and the rights of indigenous peoples and migrants. They advance social justice by removing barriers faced by people because of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, culture or disability. For the United Nations, the pursuit of social justice for all is at the core of the global mission to promote development and human dignity.



WORLD DAY OF PEACE 2018

“In a spirit of compassion, let us embrace all those fleeing from war and hunger, or forced by discrimination, persecution, poverty and environmental degradation to leave their homelands.” Pope Francis, World Day of Peace 2018



Dates of Significance

- Jan 1- World Day Of Peace
- Jan 15 - World Day for Refugees & Immigrants
- Feb 1- World Interfaith Harmony Week
- Feb 12-International Day of the Child Soldier
- Feb 20-International Day of World Social Justice

The Dates above draw together interconnected needs and issues that have a great impact on our world today – Peace, Migrants, Interfaith Harmony and the use of Child Soldiers in Conflicts. All cry out for Social Justice a need that is itself highlighted on the International Day of World Social Justice (20th Feb).



WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK

Established by the UN General Assembly in 2010 it is a recognition that that mutual understanding and interreligious dialogue constitute important dimensions of a culture of peace that should be promote harmony between all people.

LORD, MAKE US INSTRUMENTS FOR PEACE, HARMONY AND JUSTICE IN OUR WORLD TODAY