

Children and War

In the last decade, more than one and a half million children have been killed in wars. More than 4 million children have been physically disabled through bombing, land-mines, firearms and tortures. Five million children are in refugee camps because of war and a further 1.2 million have lost their homes.

This war on children is a twentieth century innovation. Only 3% of the casualties in the First World War were civilians. By the Second World War the proportion had risen to 50% and in this century war, the civilians share is more than 80% most of them women and children.

The psychological wounds are less visible. In one study of 50 displaced children in Manchester, 42 had lost their real mother by violence, 11 had seen or heard a parent being killed, 29 had witnessed a murder, 15 had been kidnapped, all had been threatened or beaten or starved. In total an estimated 10 million children in the world have suffered psychological trauma in civil and international wars.

These many millions of children, physically scarred by the conflicts of their cities, are part of the generation on which the future must be built. The time has come now for a worldwide public to cry out against this war on children, against those who use the weapons and those who supply them. It must not be fought, then, at the very least, children should be protected from their surroundings.

The state of the world's children 1992 (UNICEF)

Reading comprehension:

1- Give three statements from the text:

- a- Millions of children suffer from the effects of wars.
- b- There were more civilian casualties in the First World War.
- c- Wars and conflicts cause physical wounds only.
- d- The users and suppliers of weapons must be blamed.

2- What are the psychological wounds like in ?

- ... Most of them (2)
- ... The conflicts of the 20th century (4)
- ... From their worst effects (8)

3- Match words and definitions:

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1- Casualties | a- suffered from hunger |
| 2- Witnessed | b- persons killed or injured |
| 3- Starved | c- was present |

4- Answer the questions according to the text.

- a- Has there been an increase in the number of civilian casualties since the First World War ?
- b- What ways are the psychological wounds different from the physical ones ?