

Research Handbook on Child Soldiers

Research Handbooks in International Law series

Edited by Mark A. Drumbl, Class of 1975 Alumni Professor of Law and Director, Transnational Law Institute, Washington and Lee University, US and Jastine C. Barrett, Independent Human Rights Consultant and Honorary Researcher, Kent Law School, University of Kent, UK

Child soldiers remain poorly understood and inadequately protected, despite significant media attention and many policy initiatives. This Research Handbook aims to redress this troubling gap. It offers a reflective, fresh and nuanced review of the complex issue of child soldiering. The Handbook brings together scholars from six continents, diverse experiences, and a broad range of disciplines. Along the way, it unpacks the life-cycle of youth and militarization: from recruitment to demobilization to return to civilian life. The overarching aim of the Handbook is to render the invisible visible – the contributions map the unmapped and chart new directions. Challenging prevailing assumptions and conceptions, the Research Handbook on Child Soldiers focuses on adversity but also capacity: emphasising the resilience, humanity, and potentiality of children affected (rather than 'afflicted') by armed conflict.

'This Handbook is unique in combining different research methods and approaches across social, political and cultural studies of child soldiering. Thus, Drumbl and Barrett's edited book is a valuable resource that contributes in two ways: both as an introduction to the study of child soldiering and all of its complexity; and in showcasing important empirical work, particularly from scholars who have been engaged in child soldier research for a long time.'

– Kate Macfarlane, Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding

'The Research Handbook on Child Soldiers is well balanced, and is less on abstractions and philosophizing, and more on offering erudite principle based solutions in respect of our efforts to conceptualise and understand child soldiers across disciplinary and professional divides. True to form, it also charts the way forward as the international community grapples with the ever changing nature of conflict. This book is not so much an idea whose time has come as it is an idea whose time is long overdue in coming.'

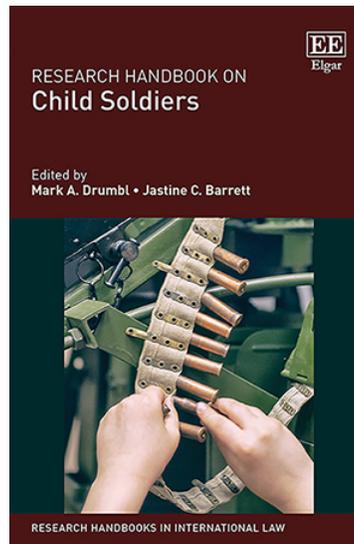
– Benyam Mezmur, University of the Western Cape, South Africa

'For this Research Handbook, Jastine Barrett and Mark Drumbl have assembled an array of scholars, drawn from six continents, with expertise in multiple fields of law, humanities, and social sciences. Their writings deploy methodologies as varied as empirical study and doctrinal analysis in order to examine situations of armed conflict and other systemic violence, across a temporal spectrum of past, present, and future. Together, these contributions place this exciting volume at the vanguard of scholarship on child soldiers.'

– Diane Marie Amann, University of Georgia, School of Law, US

'This Research Handbook of vivid research on child soldiers memorably exposes how some youth engaged in armed conflicts forget they are still children. Contributors bring rich expertise in law, sociology, ethnography, social work, psychology, political science, criminology, medical anthropology, and literary analysis to the cultural and political contexts for recruiting minors by armed groups and by national military organizations. Beyond dominant images of child soldiers as either merely passive victims or as violent terrors, the authors point toward legal and cultural reforms while cautioning against doing further harm.'

– Martha Minow, Harvard University, US



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2019	576 pp	Hardback	978 1 78811 447 9	£205.00	£184.50	\$315.00	\$283.50
2021	576 pp	Paperback	978 1 78990 332 4	£45.00	£36.00	\$69.95	\$55.96
Elgaronline 978 1 78811 448 6							

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