

Do child soldiers deserve amnesty?

Yes! They're victims.	No! They're perpetrators.
• They are kidnapped in the middle of the night. • They are drugged and brainwashed. • They are physically abused and forced to commit crimes. • They do not really want to fight in the war, they are tricked into fighting. • They have been desensitized to violence from being forced to watch gory war movies under the influence of drugs. • The U.S. government funds some of the militaries that kidnap child soldiers. • They are under the age of 18. • In Uganda alone an estimated 20,000 children are abducted. • Their frontal lobes, a part of the brain that controls decision making, will not be fully developed until the age of 21. • They are sold by their parents who do not have enough money to support themselves. • Their families are murdered and they have nowhere to go.	• They don't care about the people they murder. • They are born into it and are firm in their beliefs. • They want to please their parents who may have raised them in a militia or terrorist group. • They choose to be soldiers. • They believe having a gun is a right of passage. • Just say "no." • They grow up wanting to be soldiers. • They enjoy killing. • Some of the most brutal war crimes have been committed by child soldiers. • They are old enough to know killing is wrong. • Murder is a crime. • They kill innocent bystanders. • They do not try to escape, and do not want to escape • They like feeling powerful. • Over time they will eventually start to believe killing is okay. • They were taught killing is okay, and it is the only thing they know.

• They are not fully aware of their actions because of the influence of drugs.	• They kill for revenge, or to avenge the deaths of their family members. • Despite the circumstances they have taken people's lives. • They choose to serve their commanders and look up to them as role models.
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