Tiggy you’re dead (key stage 3)

What the photo says
This disturbing image, of a child soldier in the Congo¹, can be used as an introduction to investigating the geography of conflict; how space and resources can be contested violently, and the impact of such conflicts upon populations and landscapes. The image encourages students to compare their own personal geographies to those of a child soldier caught up in a conflict zone.

Lesson idea
Context: Development and aid, conflict and war, population

Other resources
- Before the lesson, copy and divide the image into three parts, waist height and below, waist to neck; and face upwards. Alternatively, you could place the image in a PowerPoint slide, with blocks animated to hide, and then reveal, the different sections of the photograph
- Atlases
- Child Soldier video (You Tube)
- A Duty to Protect: Child Soldiers in the DRC video
- Coalition to stop the use of child soldiers
- Child Soldiers Global Report 2008 – Facts and Figures
- Online tool for customising maps

Suggested activity
Show the students the bottom third of the image and ask them to discuss what they can tell from it. For example, where is this person located? What does this person do? Students could make brief notes. Repeat this for the second and third sections of the image. After the final reveal, allow time for students to discuss their thinking – did anything surprise them?

Read the photo caption and ask students to locate the image in an atlas. Using the image, suggested video links, and selected child soldier voices as sources, ask students to produce a comparison between their own lives and those of child soldiers. How are they different? How are they similar? You might also make reference to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child: are these children’s rights being met?

Students could then investigate countries where child soldiers are currently caught up in conflicts. They could map these on paper, or electronically, and begin to describe the distribution of child soldiers throughout the world. Choose one case study to investigate.

¹ Mai Mai child soldier smoking a cigarette, in the ‘Hauts Plateaux’ near Uvira, South Kivu, Democratic Republic of Congo (DCR), formerly Zaire. The DCR has been at the centre of what has been called Africa’s world war. The Mai Mai are one of numerous rebel movements to have emerged over the last five years, taking advantage of the prevailing anarchy to plunder the country’s many natural resources. Human rights organisations estimate that 2.5 million people have been killed in the DCR during the conflict, either as a direct result of fighting or because of disease and malnutrition. (Source: Panos Pictures.)
Curriculum opportunities

Global dimension: The activity allows students to consider the differences and similarities between childhoods in different locations.

Citizenship: The activity offers an opportunity to discuss the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically Article 38 (1989). The role of the UN and NGOs in conflict zones might also be considered, and students could discuss how conflicts can be solved peacefully.

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