

# Disrupting Classic Paradigms of Justice after an Armed Conflict: The Child Soldier Phenomenon

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Ongwen

# Ongwen's Life

Abducted as a 9-year-old child to take part in the armed conflict in Northern Uganda

Moved up the ranks of the Lord's Resistance Army

One of Kony's deputies



<https://justiceinconflict.org/2016/04/12/the-life-and-times-of-dominic-ongwen-child-soldier-and-lra-commander/>

# Ongwen before the International Criminal Court

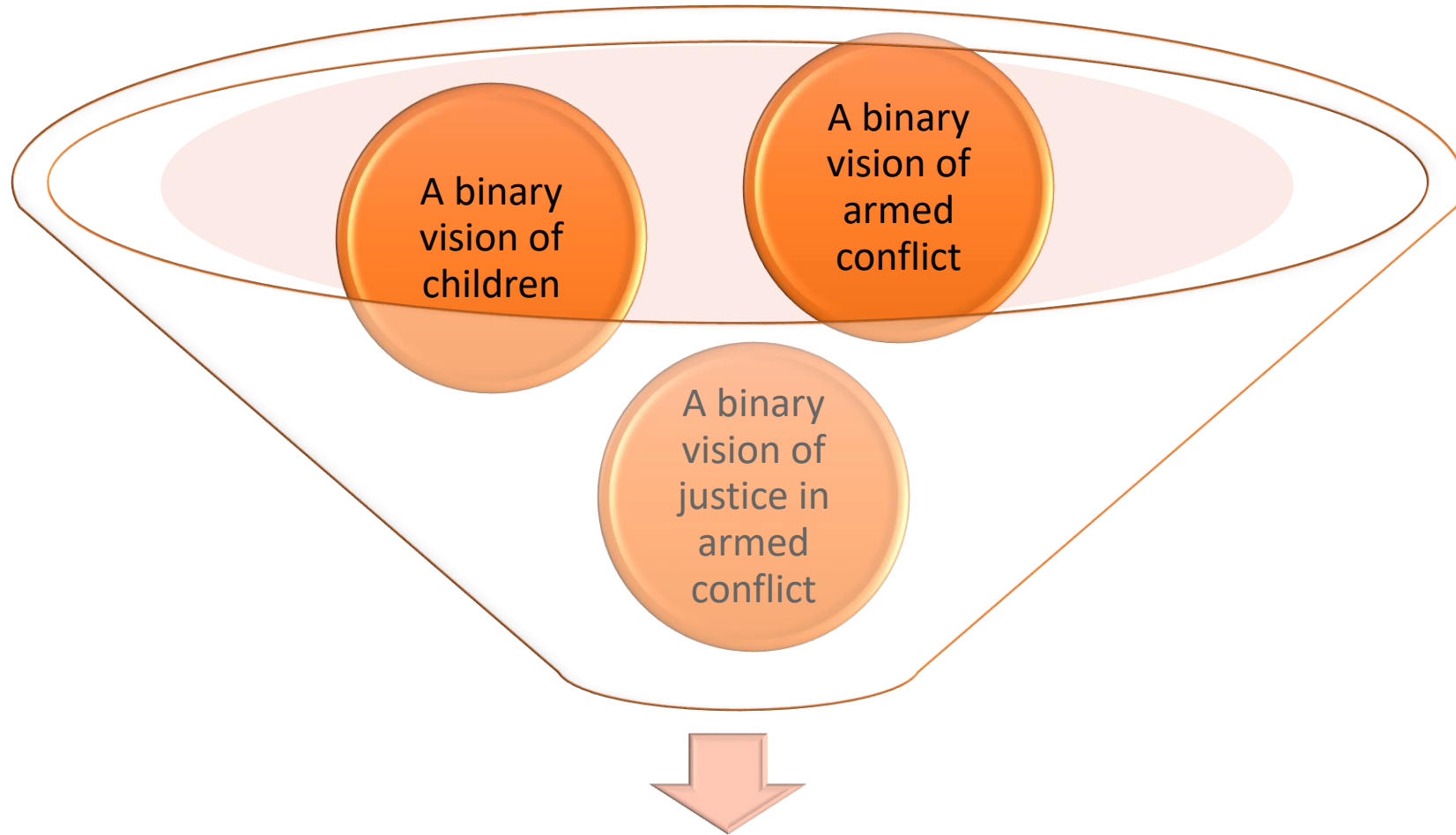
Prosecuted for crimes committed as an adult

Crimes committed

Found guilty of 61 counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes

Defences not accepted

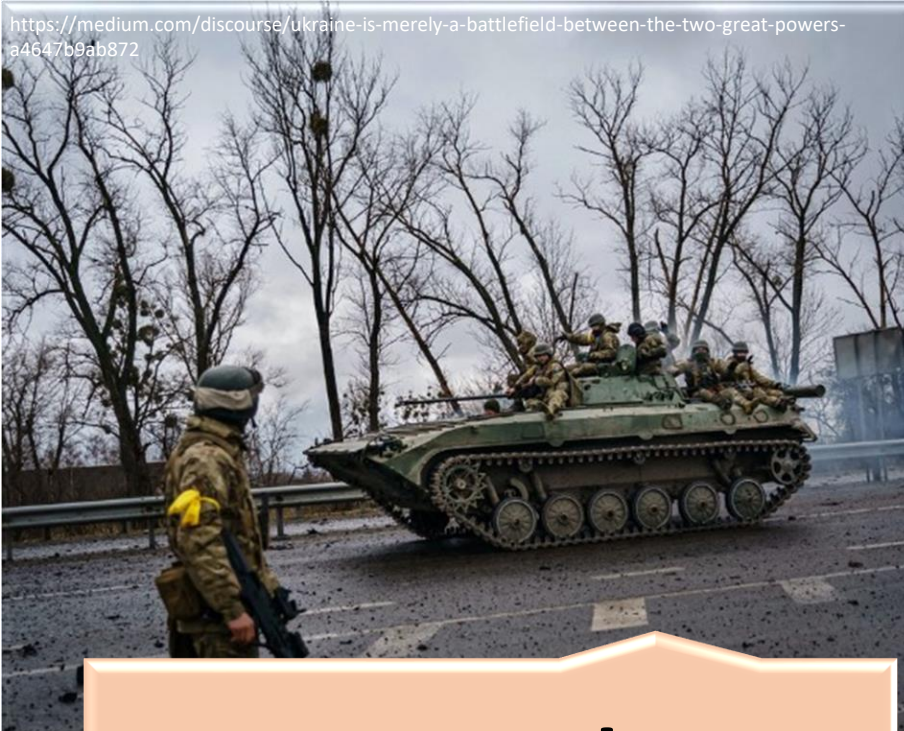
Sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment



**Justice: Back to Basics**

# A Binary Vision of Armed Conflict

# The Battlefield



People



Place





## Disruption 1: The 'New' Wars

No precise location of the battlefield  
Everyone takes part in the conflict



# A Binary Vision of Children

# Childhood

- Definition of a child: age of 18 years old (UN Convention on the Rights of the Child)
- Childhood as innocence and play
- Children as vulnerable and in need of protection
- Children good/innocent - adults bad/evil

# The Child Soldier Phenomenon

- Large proportion of the population are young people
- Children as readily available and expandable commodity
- Fighting with light weapons that children can handle
- Children in armed forces and in armed opposition group



<https://www.growthinktank.org/en/child-soldiers-a-warlike-socialization-through-force-and-manipulation/>



[https://medium.com/@david.himbara\\_27884/kagame-must-be-condemned-for-recruiting-child-soldiers-975da6412bec](https://medium.com/@david.himbara_27884/kagame-must-be-condemned-for-recruiting-child-soldiers-975da6412bec)



[https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/war\\_on\\_children-web.pdf](https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/content/dam/global/reports/education-and-child-protection/war_on_children-web.pdf)

## Disruption 2: Children as Autonomous Agents

Recruitment and use of children in armed conflict

Role played by children in armed conflicts





<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/10-facts-child-soldiers-know/>



<https://metro.co.uk/2016/07/03/sick-isis-recruitment-video-shows-child-soldiers-executing-spies-5982621/>



<https://fightslaverynow.org/why-fight-there-are-27-million-reasons/otherformsoftrafficking/child-soldiers-2/>

## Disruption 3: Children and Violence

Children as perpetrators of international crimes

Children as perpetrators of violence against children



# A Binary Vision of Justice in Armed Conflict

# Concept of Justice

- Rights/wrongs
- Good/bad
- Victims/perpetrators



## Disruption 4: Duality of Status

Victims and perpetrators  
Physical and psychological harm

Justice: Back to Basics

