The recruitment and operations of child soldiers have been hitting the headlines in politics and the media for many years. However, a much broader circle of children is affected by armed conflicts. Hence, the many challenges to deal with youth affected by armed conflict exceed by far the issue of the recruitment and demobilisation of child soldiers, but also extend to questions of rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation processes of all children and youths.

In stark contrast to the complex reality of armed conflict and the involvement of children therein, academic work thus far has taken a rather narrow view on the matter. International children’s rights law has mostly focused on age limits for the recruitment of children and international criminal law has dealt with the prosecution and punishment of child recruiters. The disciplines of psychology and pedagogical sciences have merely emphasised the effects of and recovery from traumatic exposure by individuals, with some attempts for a more psychosocial perspective. Finally, studies in the field of transitional justice have paid remarkably little attention, until very recently, to the role of children in transitional justice mechanisms, both as victims and offenders.

This book brings together for the first time a wide range of leading scholars from three disciplinary perspectives (children’s rights, psychosocial studies and transitional justice). It aims at enhancing a multidisciplinary and comprehensive approach to the rehabilitation, reintegration and reconciliation processes of children and adolescents affected by armed conflict. The 22 chapters are specifically written for this volume and deal with theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and country reports. The book also contains prefaces from two distinguished academics and policy makers in the field of international children’s rights. It will therefore not only be of interest to academics, but also to policy makers, practitioners, non-governmental organisations, the media, and every citizen interested.
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