

## UNRIC Presents



**On the occasion of UN day and to commemorate  
the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of UN Peacekeeping**

**Emmanuel Jal: War Child  
– A child soldier's story**



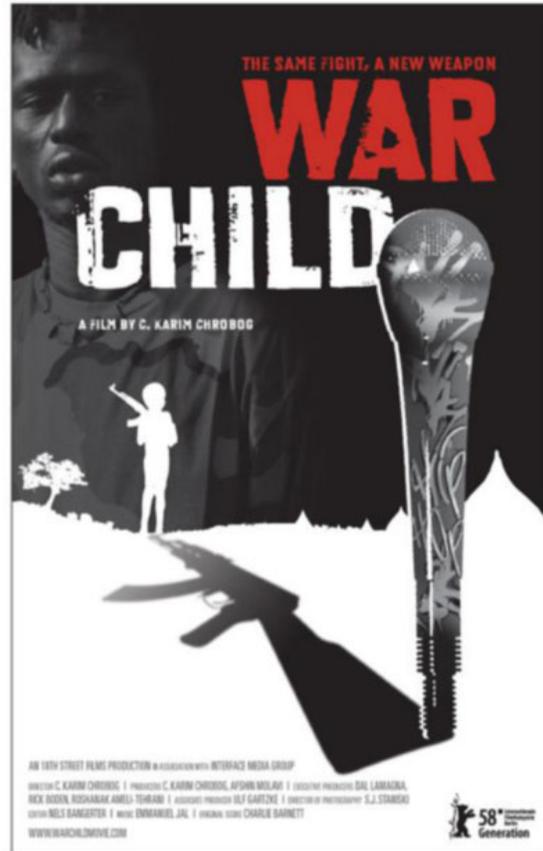
## About the film

This feature documentary film, chronicles the tumultuous, shocking, inspiring, and ultimately hopeful life of Emmanuel Jal, a former child soldier of Sudan's brutal civil war and emerging international hip-hop star with a message of peace for his war-torn land and beloved Africa. Jal's life story, in many ways, mirrors his homeland: tragedy and terror mingling with hope and restoration.

**In the early** 1980s, at the age of seven, Jal was swept in to Sudan's civil war, becoming one of 10,000 child soldiers conscripted on both sides of the two decades' long conflict. Orphaned and adrift, firing a gun he could barely hold aloft, trekking through empty deserts in search of food and shelter, he was eventually adopted by British aidworker Emma McCune who famously married Sudanese Guerilla Commander Riek Machar. Shortly after she adopted Jal, McCune died in a car crash, leaving Emmanuel 'orphaned' once again.

**Jal's rise** from orphan to child soldier to refugee to rap star with a message of peace represents one of the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries' most inspiring and hopeful journeys, and a metaphor for the broader African predicament.

**Emmanuel's journey** is, in many ways, just beginning. His dream of *gwa*, peace, in Sudan, and prosperity in Africa, is threatened by corrupt leaders, genocidal war lords, and western indifference. Hopefully, Emmanuel's peace – his quest to make the world a better place through his music and activism – will prove to be far more significant than Emmanuel's former war.

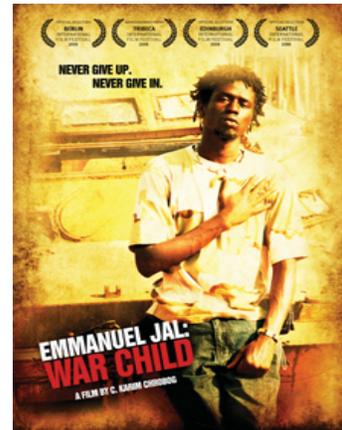


**This documentary** tells the story of Emmanuel Jal's life through his own words and his music, explores Sudan's tormented modern history of civil war, assesses the prospects for peace after the January 2005 ceasefire agreement, highlights the growing problem of war children, and shines a light on the growing African hip-hop scene that is tackling some of the continent's most serious ills through its music.

**Jal's life** and music, Sudan's modern history, and the African predicament will intertwine in this gripping story that will both haunt and inspire viewers all over the world.

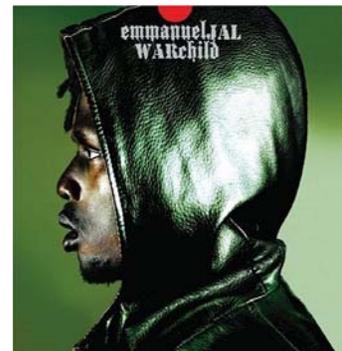
## About Emmanuel Jal

Emmanuel Jal has won worldwide acclaim for his unique style of hip hop. His music can be heard alongside Coldplay, Gorillaz, and Radiohead on the fundraising 'Warchild - Help a Day in the Life' album, as well as in three ER episodes, the National Geographic documentary God Grew Tired of Us, and more recently in the feature film Blood Diamond starring Leonardo DiCaprio. He also featured on John Lennons 'Instant Karma: The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur' amongst the likes of U2, REM and Lenny Kravitz.



**The Film**

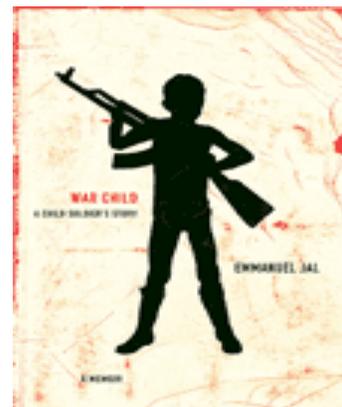
To help ease the pain of what he had experienced as a child soldier, Emmanuel started singing. In 2005, he released his first album, Gua ("peace" in his native Nuer tongue), with the title track broadcast across Africa over the BBC and becoming a number one hit in Kenya. Gua also earned him a spot on Bob Geldof's "Live 8" concert in the UK.



**The Album**

Jal performed at Nelson Mandela's 90th birthday celebrations in Hyde Park, London, June 08, he shared a stage with Alicia Keys, Annie Lennox, Damien Marley and Stephen Marley at the Black Ball in London in July 08 and also addressed delegates at the UN in New York in the same month. Jal has also performed with Razorlight, Supergrass, and Faithless in Europe.

'War Child' premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2008, and won the Cadillac audience choice award at the Tribeca film festival. His autobiography has been sold to St. Martin's Press with anticipated release of spring 2009. His new album 'Warchild' was released on 12th May 2008.



**The Book**

## Children affected by armed conflict

Children are vulnerable to military recruitment and manipulation into violence because they are innocent and impressionable. They are forced or enticed to join armed groups. Regardless of how they are recruited, child soldiers are victims, whose participation in conflict bears serious implications for their physical and emotional well-being.

**Fighting groups** have developed brutal and sophisticated techniques to separate and isolate children from their communities. Children are often terrorized into obedience, consistently made to fear for their lives. They quickly recognize that absolute obedience is the only means to ensure survival. Sometimes they are compelled to participate in the killing of other children or family members, because it is understood by these groups that there is "no way back home" for children after they have committed such crimes.

**The considerable** challenges in healing and reintegrating children into their communities in the aftermath of conflict is sometimes further compounded by severe addiction to hard drugs. In Sierra Leone, for instance, a volatile mixture of cocaine and gunpowder was often given to children to make them fearless in battle. And, because children are now also the instruments of brutality, sometimes committing the very worst atrocities, reintegration is often a



complex process of community healing and atonement, and negotiation with families to accept their children back.

**All these dimensions** of the experience of child combatants carry significant implications and challenges in terms of design and resources needs for psychosocial and other reintegration programming. The Paris Commitments and the Principles and Guidelines on Children Associated With Armed Forces or Armed Groups provide guidelines on the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of all categories of children associated with armed groups.

**The plight** and circumstances of children affected by armed conflict has commanded the focused attention of the international community. Critical initiatives, concerted advocacy and action for children have significantly advanced the agenda for their protection. However, in spite of that commitment, many conflict situations continue to be characterized by grave violations of the most basic rights of children.

For more information go to <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/paris-principles.html>

Sources: <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/childsoldiers.html>

Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict A/63/227

## **Facts and figures**

- More than 2 million children have died as a direct result of armed conflict over the last decade.
- At least 6 million children, have been permanently disabled or seriously injured.
- More than 1 million have been orphaned or separated from their families.
- Between 8,000 and 10,000 children are killed or maimed by landmines every year.

The impact of conflict on children is multifaceted as war violates all rights of children. Displacement, unlawful recruitment in armed forces and armed groups, sexual violence, killing and maiming, separation from family, trafficking are some of the direct consequences of war on children. However, the indirect consequences of conflict, such as the loss of basic services including water, sanitation, health and education, as well as the rise of poverty, malnutrition and disease, also have a horrific impact on children.

In recent decades, the proportion of civilian casualties in armed conflicts has increased dramatically and is now estimated at more than 90 per cent. About half of the victims are children. An estimated 20 million children have been forced to flee their homes because of conflict and human rights violations and are living as refugees in neighbouring countries or are internally displaced within their own national borders.

An estimated 300,000 child soldiers - boys and girls under the age of 18 are involved in more than 30 conflicts worldwide. Child soldiers are used as combatants, messengers, porters, cooks and to provide sexual services. Some are forcibly recruited or abducted, others are driven to join by poverty, abuse and discrimination, or to seek revenge for violence enacted against themselves and their families.

During armed conflict, girls and women are threatened by rape, domestic violence, sexual exploitation, trafficking, sexual humiliation and mutilation. Use of rape and other forms of violence against women has become a strategy in wars for all sides.

In 2002 the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict entered into force. It outlaws the involvement of children under age 18 in hostilities. Since the entry into force in 2002 it has been ratified by 121 Member States and ratifications continue.