

The Forgotten Children: One Man's War

A News Documentary Special Presentation



In the middle of one of the World's most dangerous and remote war zones there is a Reverend from Pennsylvania and an unexpectedly placed orphanage. He is committed to protecting children from unimaginable fates while fighting to rescue others from a ruthless rebel army. He is one man, alone at the front line of a war where gross human rights violations go largely ignored by the global community. Perceived by those in the region as a wild west American 'gunslinger,' this unconventional reverend has answered the call to save the lives of children.

THE LRA:

A decade ago 8,000 children in Southern Sudan and Northern Uganda were abducted to join the rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and thousands were killed. Today, the tragedy has escalated as over 30,000 children kidnapped and tens of thousands children killed. And since 1995, more than 4 million villagers have been forced from their homes and 2 million have been killed.

For over 20 years the borders of Sudan and Uganda has been ravaged by the LRA headed by Joseph Kony – who believes he is a spiritual leader for God and the reincarnation of Jesus. The LRA abducts children as young as 8 from burning villages as their parents are hacked by machetes or murdered. In some cases, children are forced to execute their own parents - refusing any order by the LRA is certain death.

THE REVEREND:

Son of a Pennsylvania ironworker, Sam Childers (46) is an unlikely hero and warrior. A high school dropout, he is a former drug dealer and violent outlaw biker who rode with the Hell's Angels. But upon getting married and having a daughter, he turned his life around and created a construction business and became a minister in 1995.

Childers first went to Sudan in 1998 on a medical mission to help people living in remote villages who were victims of landmine explosions. Childers quickly encountered the vast amount of children abducted and forced to become soldiers of the LRA. Recognizing that neither the government nor any of the international humanitarian organizations were protecting remote villages or mounting rescue attempts, Childers decided to do something about it: rescue as many children as possible.

He gained moral support of both the Southern Sudan and Uganda governments and has been supplied a platoon of soldiers from the controversial Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) as well as village volunteers. Childers has become a greatly respected tactical commander, revered for his skill as a sharpshooter. Childers and his team go deep in the bush where only the LRA inhabit and has been known for taking 10 men to engage 200 LRA soldiers and emerge victorious. He and his mini-militia have been ambushed and bombed countless times while taking part in intense gun battles. As a result, his critics have called him a 'Christian mercenary' – a description Childers believes is unfair. He prefers to be known as 'one man making a difference' in a region of the world that is overlooked.

To date Childers has rescued over 1,000 children and reunited 700 of them with their families – he has also saved thousands of adults. He purchased 40 acres of land right in the war zone and established an orphanage that today protects 300 other children made orphans by the LRA. The orphanage is protected by a 10-foot barbed wire chain fence and patrolled by 10 soldiers day and night. There is also a platoon of SPLA soldiers stationed directly outside the compound. Since its completion four years ago, the orphanage has never been raided.

Spending seven months a year in Africa has put Childers in near financial ruin. Five years ago, he had a foreclosure note on his home and his truck was repossessed. The orphanage provides 1,500 meals a day and has an operating budget of \$20,000 to \$30,000 per month. Last year Childers was able to raise \$700,000 through contributions by the American Evangelical Community.

INTERNATIONAL INVOLVEMENT:

The United Nations has denounced the LRA in Sudan and Uganda for its abuse of children as soldiers, servants and sex slaves. But neither the U.N. nor other aid groups will go near the hot zones and Sam Childers remains the only person protecting and rescuing children on the front line. LRA peace negotiations began in 2006 and are currently ongoing, but LRA leader Joseph Kony refuses to acknowledge peace talks and the violence and abduction of children continues.

UPCOMING MISSIONS:

-Coordinating with the SPLA, Childers can quickly mobilize rescue missions when he receives credible information and expects his next rescue mission will be next month.

-The governments of Southern Sudan, Uganda and Congo have asked Childers to assist commanding on a unique joint manhunt mission to track down Joseph Kony. It is the first operation of its kind and is expected to commence soon.

-Childers is planning to sweep the deep bush (a project never performed) to assess the conditions of uncharted territories/villages and gain a clear evaluation of the LRA's control and their movements.

-Childers is coordinating the infiltration of a children's slavery auction. He has found a location where over 30,000 children have been sold into slavery and is planning to go undercover (with cameras) to the next auction.

-Both the Department of Justice and the FBI are seeking Childers' assistance with a human trafficking ring in Minnesota where rebel Somalians are believed to be recruiting U.S. Muslims and transporting them to Southern Sudan/Northern Uganda. With the help of the LRA, the FBI believes the recruits are being trained as suicide bombers. The FBI is hiring Sam and prepping agents to accompany him on a mission of LRA area camps to assess the accuracy of their intelligence and search for Americans.

- While performing search missions, Childers also provides humanitarian relief to many regions. He routinely provides food and medical supplies to a remote hospital several days from his orphanage and will take as many orphaned children as he can back with him. He also drills and repairs wells as villagers deep in the bush often drink the same dirty water as animals and are not capable of drilling new wells. The few wells that do exist have broken pumps or have been destroyed by the LRA.

Childers' story recently caught Hollywood's attention. He and his camp were the inspiration for storylines of a two-hour movie of the hit FOX series *24* called REDEMPTION. Childers assisted show producers and provided footage used in the show. Following the attention from the show, he has a book due out in late Spring called *Another Man's War* and will be featured in an upcoming issue of *Vanity Fair*.

The Forgotten Children will provide viewers with an unprecedented view of the abuse of children by the LRA and Sam Childers' role in the conflict. Childers and the SPLA have agreed to let cameras accompany the next rescue attempt, the assessment mission of the deep bush and an attempt to gain access to a children's slave auction. Other major interviews include: Uganda President Yoweri Museveni, Southern Sudan President Salva Kiir Mayardt and former LRA members.

