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Song of the Child Soldier

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I was born in Kailahun
Pendembu village,
There I was born. There I stayed with my mother.

I was nine years of age
when the rebels attacked the village,
and the rebels captured me.

When the rebels captured me,
I got separated from my parents.
After that, I did not see my parents
anymore.

Before I was separated from my mother,
she told me, "My child,
now you are nine years,
you're supposed to be in the fourth grade."
Thus I was able
to know my age.

I was not the only one captured—
they captured most of the boys.

What is a rebel? A rebel
is somebody who is in the bush
who has a gun
but is not a soldier.

The rebels looted the village
where I was captured.
I, along with the other boys they captured,
were given loads to carry to the rebels' base,
which was called Ngeihun. We went to Ngeihun.

We were together with the rebels
in the village of Ngeihun.
When we were caught and brought there,
the rebels used to take
my captured companions and me
around to find food.

The loads that were given to me to carry
were too heavy for me
so I was usually unable
to carry them.

Therefore, on our way for food-finding
we captured civilians
to carry loads for us.

When I was with the rebels at Ngeihun
Kamajors came
and attacked the village.

During that attack,
the Kamajors captured
seven of us little boys
along with three women.

Six of us boys were the same age—
nine or ten years,
and one was fifteen.

Those of us who were captured
were placed on the ground
and told we should sit there.

When the Kamajors captured us,
they entered the huts
and looted some property
and brought it outside,
then set some houses on fire.

The things that they looted—
some clothes, some seed rice, a tape-player—
they gave us
to carry on our heads.
They said we should come down
to Kenema.

When they gave us the loads to carry
on our heads,
we went through a bush path
and we reached a river called Moi.

There the Kamajors placed the three women

who had been captured
and shot them
and they fell into the river.

They shot the three women.
They fell into the river.

Then we crossed the river.
We used a boat to cross.
There was one boat
with an oarsman
and we took turns
being rowed across the river.
Before we crossed the river,
they killed the three women there.
And then we crossed.

The Kamajors said they killed
the three women
because they were rebels' wives.

After,
we continued on a bush path
until we entered Kenema.