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Children caught in Sri Lanka fighting

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THE ARTICLE

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, is worried about tens of thousands of children caught up in the conflict in Sri Lanka. UNICEF says a growing number of children have died in the past week because of fighting between Sri Lanka's army and the rebel Tamil Tigers. Sri Lanka's defence secretary said the UN numbers were exaggerated. The UN estimates there are a quarter of a million civilians trapped in the fighting. It has requested both sides in the war to give "absolute priority" to the safety and security of children. UN spokesman Daniel Toole said: "We have clear evidence that children are being caught up in the crossfire, and that children are being injured and killed." He added that: "It is crucial that safe areas, schools and medical facilities are protected and considered zones of peace, in all circumstances."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's guarantee of safety for all civilians trapped in the area. Mr. Ban asked both sides to make sure civilians escaped the conflict zone peacefully. He urged the Tigers to let civilians move freely to areas where they felt most secure. The situation remains extremely dangerous for civilians as Sri Lanka has said it will not stop the fighting. A government spokesman said: "There will be no ceasefire. We will continue with our military operations and we will continue to liberate areas which have not been liberated so far." This seems certain to increase the risk of innocent, civilian deaths. 70,000 have died since the Tigers started their fight for a Tamil homeland in 1976.

WARM-UPS

1. CHILDREN: Walk around the class and talk to other students about children. Change partners often. After you finish, sit with your partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

UNICEF / conflict / fighting / exaggerations / civilians / priorities / evidence / crossfire / guarantees / safety / moving freely / feeling secure / ceasefires / risks / operations

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. FIGHTING: What would you worry most about armies fighting around you? Complete the table below. Change partners and share what you wrote.

| Things | Biggest concerns |
|---------------|------------------|
| Children | |
| Home | |
| Country | |
| Neighbourhood | |
| Yourself | |
| Other _____ | |

4. CEASEFIRE: Students A **strongly** believe all sides should always agree to a ceasefire; Students B **strongly** believe sometimes a country needs to ignore calls for a ceasefire. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. PRIORITIES: What are your priorities in life? Rank these in order of most important. Discuss your ranking with your partner(s). Change partners and talk about your conversations.

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| ___ your health | ___ marriage and children |
| ___ your career | ___ happiness |
| ___ a home of your own | ___ being the best |
| ___ a car | ___ having all the possessions you want |

6. CONFLICT: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'conflict'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Many children have been caught fighting in Sri Lanka. | T / F |
| b. The number of Sri Lankan children dying in the fighting is going down. | T / F |
| c. The UN guesses the fighting has trapped over a million people. | T / F |
| d. The UN said it was essential to keep schools and hospitals safe. | T / F |
| e. Sri Lanka's president could guaranteed safety for civilians. | T / F |
| f. Sri Lanka's military leaders have not agreed to stop fighting. | T / F |
| g. Sri Lanka's army wants to capture areas it does not yet hold. | T / F |
| h. Around 17,000 people have died in the three-decade-long conflict. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. caught up in | a. key |
| 2. exaggerated | b. freed |
| 3. estimates | c. involved |
| 4. crucial | d. promise |
| 5. circumstances | e. overstated |
| 6. guarantee | f. safe |
| 7. zone | g. guesses |
| 8. secure | h. struggle |
| 9. liberated | i. conditions |
| 10. fight | j. area |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one. combination is possible):

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. tens of thousands | a. all civilians |
| 2. caught up | b. exaggerated |
| 3. the UN numbers were | c. dangerous for civilians |
| 4. priority to the | d. in the conflict |
| 5. in | e. increase the risk |
| 6. guarantee of safety for | f. of children |
| 7. make sure civilians escaped the | g. ceasefire |
| 8. The situation remains extremely | h. all circumstances |
| 9. There will be no | i. safety and security of children |
| 10. This seems certain to | j. conflict zone peacefully |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, is _____ about tens of thousands of children caught up in the conflict in Sri Lanka. UNICEF says a _____ number of children have died in the past week because of fighting between Sri Lanka's army and the _____ Tamil Tigers. Sri Lanka's defence secretary said the UN numbers were exaggerated. The UN estimates there are a _____ of a million civilians trapped in the fighting. It has requested both sides in the war to give "absolute priority" to the _____ and security of children. UN spokesman Daniel Toole said: "We have _____ evidence that children are being caught up in the crossfire, and that children are being _____ and killed." He added that: "It is crucial that safe areas, schools and medical facilities are protected and considered _____ of peace, in all circumstances."

rebel
clear
quarter
worried
injured
safety
zones
growing

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has _____ Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's guarantee of safety for all civilians trapped in the area. Mr. Ban asked both _____ to make sure civilians escaped the conflict zone _____. He urged the Tigers to let civilians move freely to areas where they felt most _____. The situation remains extremely dangerous for civilians as Sri Lanka has said it will not stop the fighting. A government spokesman said: "There will be no _____. We will continue with our military operations and we will continue to _____ areas which have not been liberated so far." This seems _____ to increase the risk of innocent, civilian deaths. 70,000 have died since the Tigers started their _____ for a Tamil homeland in 1976.

liberate
peacefully
welcomed
ceasefire
fight
sides
secure
certain

LISTENING: Listen and fill in the spaces.

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, is _____ thousands of children caught up in the conflict in Sri Lanka. UNICEF says a growing number of children have died _____ because of fighting between Sri Lanka's army and the rebel Tamil Tigers. Sri Lanka's defence secretary said the UN numbers _____. The UN estimates there are a quarter of a million civilians trapped in the fighting. It has requested both sides _____ "absolute priority" to the safety and security of children. UN spokesman Daniel Toole said: "We have clear evidence that children are _____ the crossfire, and that children are being injured and killed." He added that: "It is crucial that safe areas, schools and medical facilities are protected and considered zones of peace, _____."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's _____ for all civilians trapped in the area. Mr. Ban asked both sides to make sure civilians escaped the conflict zone peacefully. He urged the Tigers to let civilians _____ where they felt most secure. The situation remains extremely dangerous for civilians as Sri Lanka _____ stop the fighting. A government spokesman said: "There will be no ceasefire. We will continue with our military operations and we will continue _____ which have not been liberated so far." This seems _____ the risk of innocent, civilian deaths. 70,000 have died since the Tigers started _____ Tamil homeland in 1976.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words '**cross**' and '**fire**'.

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| cross | fire |
|--------------|-------------|

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• tens• growing• numbers• both• clear• peace | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• welcomed• sides• freely• stop• continue• started |
|---|---|

STUDENT SRI LANKA SURVEY

Write five GOOD questions about Sri Lanka in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper.

When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

| | STUDENT 1 _____ | STUDENT 2 _____ | STUDENT 3 _____ |
|------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Q.1. | | | |
| Q.2. | | | |
| Q.3. | | | |
| Q.4. | | | |
| Q.5. | | | |

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

SRI LANKA DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'Sri Lanka'?
- c) What do you know about UNICEF?
- d) What should the world do to help children in conflicts?
- e) What do you know about the Tamil Tigers?
- f) Why do you think people make exaggerations during wars?
- g) What should the "absolute priority" of the UN be in Sri Lanka?
- h) What should happen to soldiers, armies and countries found guilty of killing children during a war?
- i) Are there any rules during war?
- j) How do you think children suffer during wartime?

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SRI LANKA DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) Do you think it's possible to guarantee the safety of civilians?
- c) Where do thousands of people go when they escape a conflict zone?
How do they survive?
- d) What three adjectives describe war for you?
- e) Do you think Sri Lanka has a duty to agree to a ceasefire?
- f) Do you think Sri Lanka's army can ever defeat the Tamil Tigers?
- g) Do you think it would be better to grant the Tamil Tigers their own homeland and end the killing?
- h) Would you agree to part of your country breaking away to become a separate country?
- i) When will wars stop?
- j) What questions would you like to ask a child in the middle of the conflict?

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LANGUAGE

The United Nations children's agency, UNICEF, is (1) _____ about tens of thousands of children caught up in the conflict in Sri Lanka. UNICEF says a growing (2) _____ of children have died in the past week because of fighting between Sri Lanka's army and the (3) _____ Tamil Tigers. Sri Lanka's defence secretary said the UN numbers were exaggerated. The UN estimates there are a quarter of a million civilians trapped in the (4) _____. It has requested both sides in the war to give "absolute priority" to the safety and security of children. UN spokesman Daniel Toole said: "We have (5) _____ evidence that children are being caught up in the crossfire, and that children are being injured and killed." He added that: "It is crucial that safe areas, schools and medical facilities are protected and considered zones of peace, in (6) _____ circumstances."

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has welcomed Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa's guarantee of (7) _____ for all civilians trapped in the area. Mr. Ban asked both sides to make sure civilians (8) _____ the conflict zone peacefully. He urged the Tigers to let civilians move (9) _____ to areas where they felt most secure. The situation remains extremely dangerous for civilians as Sri Lanka has said it will not stop the fighting. A government spokesman said: "There will be (10) _____ ceasefire. We will continue with our military operations and we will continue to liberate areas which have not been liberated (11) _____ far." This seems certain to increase the risk of innocent, civilian deaths. 70,000 have died since the Tigers started their (12) _____ for a Tamil homeland in 1976.

Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-------------------|---------------|---------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) worry | (b) worrier | (c) worries | (d) worried |
| 2. | (a) numeral | (b) number | (c) numbering | (d) numbers |
| 3. | (a) rebel | (b) rebellion | (c) rebelled | (d) rebel yell |
| 4. | (a) fighters | (b) fought | (c) fighter | (d) fighting |
| 5. | (a) clears | (b) clarity | (c) clear | (d) clearly |
| 6. | (a) every | (b) all | (c) whole | (d) each |
| 7. | (a) safety | (b) safer | (c) safest | (d) safe |
| 8. | (a) escape artist | (b) escaping | (c) escapes | (d) escaped |
| 9. | (a) freedom | (b) freely | (c) frees | (d) free time |
| 10. | (a) non | (b) none | (c) not | (d) no |
| 11. | (a) for | (b) that | (c) so | (d) of |
| 12. | (a) fight | (b) fought | (c) fighter | (d) fistfight |

HOMework

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about the conflict in Sri Lanka. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. WAR CHILDREN: Make a poster for the United Nations. Create and describe the rules armies must follow regarding children in war zones. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. WAR: Write a magazine article about war and when it will end.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. CONFLICT ZONE: Write an imaginary conversation between a child caught in the middle of the fighting and an enemy soldier. The child begins by talking about his/her family.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s). Role play your conversation in front of the class.

6. LETTER: Write a letter to a child trapped in the war zone in Sri Lanka. Ask him/her three questions about his/her life. Give him/her three suggestions on what he/she should do to survive. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. F b. F c. F d. T e. T f. T g. T h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------|
| 1. caught up in | a. involved |
| 2. exaggerated | b. overstated |
| 3. estimates | c. guesses |
| 4. crucial | d. key |
| 5. circumstances | e. conditions |
| 6. guarantee | f. promise |
| 7. zone | g. area |
| 8. secure | h. safe |
| 9. liberated | i. freed |
| 10. fight | j. struggle |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. tens of thousands | a. of children |
| 2. caught up | b. in the conflict |
| 3. the UN numbers were | c. exaggerated |
| 4. priority to the | d. safety and security of children |
| 5. in | e. all circumstances |
| 6. guarantee of safety for | f. all civilians |
| 7. make sure civilians escaped the | g. conflict zone peacefully |
| 8. The situation remains extremely | h. dangerous for civilians |
| 9. There will be no | i. ceasefire |
| 10. This seems certain to | j. increase the risk |

GAP FILL:

Children caught in Sri Lanka fighting

A woman in Southern California gave **birth** on January 27th to octuplets. It is only the second time in US history a mother has delivered eight babies. It is also only the second time **ever** for all octuplets to survive their first day. Doctors said the six tiny boys and two girls were all doing well and **breathing** on their own. They all arrived nine weeks early and **ranged** in weight from 0.68kg to 1.47kg. The mother and the team of doctors received a **huge** surprise at the end of the birth – an eighth baby. The mother believed she was going to have **just** seven babies (septuplets) before the birth. After the doctors delivered babies A to G, they **discovered** baby H. The mother asked the nurses: "Really? An eighth baby? How did we **miss** that baby?"

There are no pictures of the babies yet. The mother has asked the hospital to **keep** her identity a secret. She also does not want the media to find out whether or not she **took** fertility drugs before becoming pregnant. Dr Richard Paulson of the University of Southern California told reporters that the octuplets were **probably** because of fertility drugs. He also spoke about the **risks** involved in multiple births: "It's a risky decision to try to have all eight babies. I would not recommend it **under** any circumstances," he said. He added that the chances of having eight children naturally, without drugs, were "unbelievably **rare**". Twins occur in **roughly** 1 in 80 births; triplets in 1 in 6,400 births. The likelihood of octuplets being born is 1 in 20 **trillion** pregnancies.

LANGUAGE WORK

- 1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a