

ALLONS-Y

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ABOUT THE COVER ART

'A Path Treacherously Carved'

Within this piece, I wanted to confront the conflict between childhood optimism confronted by the depravity of war-torn conditions. The child within the frame looks onto the horizon with a hope for education and longing for the innocence of childhood while bearing arms – weary of the dangers that may lie ahead. The image of the loaded AK-47 lodged against the school books within the child's bag amplifies the absurdity of the competing priorities that a child must contend with in places where war runs rampant. In line with this preposterous predicament, I have titled the piece 'A Path Treacherously Carved' to assert that this fate is externally assigned. In doing so, I hope to remind all powers that be of their responsibility to these innocent children and provoke them towards honest and urgent actions to remedy this crisis.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Shawn Mwenje is a visual artist based in Nairobi, Kenya. A lot of his art features contemporary takes on the black African experience while integrating wider themes captured emphatically through portraiture. Although he shares an affinity for oil painting, he still aims to thoroughly embrace experimentation in both subject matter and medium. Shawn creates a lot of art behind the name, Chezachora (CZ), a blend of two Swahili words meaning play and draw respectively – this embodies the energy behind his work as he embraces the spirit of free, playful and spontaneous creation.

Along with being an artist, Shawn is currently enrolled at the University of Cambridge, studying Architecture, and striving to convey the same African authenticity and consciousness through design within the built environment.

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*Photo caption: The launch of the Vancouver Principles at the UN Peacekeeping Defence Ministerial in Vancouver, Canada on 15 November 2017.
Photo: The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace and Security.*

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Photo: Josh Boyter

ABOUT THE DALLAIRE INSTITUTE

The Dallaire Institute for Children, Peace, and Security was founded by General Roméo Dallaire in 2007, and Dalhousie University, located in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has provided a home to the Institute since 2010. General Dallaire first experienced the issue of child soldiers as the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda during the 1994 genocide. During this time, General Dallaire realized that he and his troops were ill-prepared to face children recruited and used as soldiers. Drawing on this experience, the Dallaire Institute was created with the unique premise that preventing violence against children requires a dual lens that is focused on prioritizing the protection of children, as well as understanding the significant operational impacts upon security sector actors.

Through academic and practitioner training, interdisciplinary and applied research, and community engagement, the Dallaire Institute advances innovative strategies for preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and violence. Uniquely, the Dallaire Institute works directly with the security sector to implement this prevention strategy. The Dallaire Institute has fifteen years of experience working directly with security actors, including the military, police, intelligence, and corrections, to strengthen operational, strategic, and tactical capacities to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts and violence.

The Dallaire Institute advances understanding about the fragile contexts that threaten children, increase their vulnerability to extreme violence and insecurity, and diminish their agency to positively impact change. These challenges perpetuate cycles of inequality and violence that continue over generations. Through this work we hope to build a more holistic, prevention-oriented approach to the issue of child soldiers that complements current efforts while providing innovative solutions with the ultimate vision of building a world where children are at the heart of peace and security.



*Lt. Gen. Roméo Dallaire, Rwanda, 1994.
Used under permission from the National Speakers Bureau.*

ABOUT ALLONS-Y: JOURNAL OF CHILDREN, PEACE AND SECURITY

In January 1994, General Dallaire, then the Force Commander of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), sent a fax to UN headquarters in New York warning of the impending genocide. He signed the fax with the line “peux ce que veux. Allons-y” – “Where there’s a will, there’s a way. Let’s go.” At the time, there was not a will among the international community, with lethal results for nearly a million Rwandans.

Since then, General Dallaire has worked tirelessly to ensure that there is both a will and a way to prevent mass atrocities in the future. However, action must be informed by understanding for it to be effective, and this has led to General Dallaire’s focus on preventing the recruitment and use of children in armed violence. The creation and adoption of the Vancouver Principles on Peacekeeping and the Prevention of the Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers in 2017, is helping to focus and drive action by the international community to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed violence through ensuring that security sector actors are trained and prepared to prevent recruitment. Doing so requires learning from experiences and sharing knowledge on all aspects of training, education, research, and prevention in this area.

Published since 2016, the Dallaire Institute journal Allons-y now focuses on supporting the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. Since volume 4 (2020), the journal focuses on commentaries, peer-reviewed research and policy articles which focus on all aspects of the implementation of the Vancouver Principles. The articles provide guidance, policy recommendations, and new knowledge to support the international community’s work to end the recruitment and use of children in armed violence.