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Violation faced by children in conflict zones
and solutions to improve their situation.

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Violations faced by Children in Conflict Zones

According to the United Nations children face 6 major violations during war time and in conflict zones. These six grave violations are:

1. Killing and injuring of children

The right of civilians not to be arbitrarily deprived of life and the prohibitions against killing or injuring civilians are principles firmly enshrined in international humanitarian law, international human rights law and international legal system.

2. Recruitment or use of children as soldiers

Thousands of children are recruited and used as soldiers in armed conflicts around the world. Some children are abducted and beaten into submission, others join military groups to escape poverty, to defend their communities, out of a feeling of revenge or for other reasons.

3. Sexual violence against children

Sexual violence is increasingly a characteristic of conflict and is often perpetrated against girls and boys. Children who experience sexual violence suffer from long-term psychological trauma, health consequences including transmitted infections such as HIV/AIDS and early pregnancies. Their reintegration is an even greater

challenge as communities often stigmatize girls who have been associated with armed groups and are suspected of having been raped.

4. Abduction of children

In times of war, children are too often abducted by parties to conflict and subjected to brutal treatment. The abduction of children is the precursor to other grave violations. Children can be abducted to be killed or injured, to become victims of sexual violence or to be recruited to the ranks of an army or armed groups.

5. Attacks against schools or hospitals

Schools and hospitals must be zones of peace, where children are granted protection even in times of conflict. Yet, there is an increasing trend of schools and hospitals being attacked with detrimental effects on children. Children, teachers, doctors and nurses are subject to threats by parties to conflict if suspected, for example, to support the other party to the conflict. Also of great concern is the use of schools for military purposes.

6. Denial of humanitarian access for children

Humanitarian access is crucial in situations of armed conflict where civilians, including children are in desperate need of assistance. Denial of humanitarian access entails blocking the free passage or timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to persons in need as well as the deliberate attacks against humanitarian workers.

Ending and preventing these six grave violations should be the special focus of all the countries around the world.

Countries with severe violations of Children's Rights

1. Afghanistan

Violence and bloodshed remain a daily occurrence, with some 5,000 children killed or injured in 2017 and the first three quarters of 2018, and children making up 89 per cent of civilian casualties from explosive remnants of war.

2. Myanmar

The UN has received reports of violations of the rights of Rohingya remaining in northern Rakhine State, which include allegations of killings, disappearances and arbitrary arrests. There are also widespread restrictions on the rights to freedom of movement and barriers to access health and education including in central Rakhine State. Ensuring children have access to quality education and other essential services will avert a 'lost generation' of Rohingya children; otherwise, they will lack the skills they need to contribute to society.

3. South Sudan

Relentless conflict and insecurity throughout the annual lean season has pushed 6.1 million people into extreme hunger. Even with the advent of the rainy season, more than 43 per cent of the population remains food insecure. While the promise of a revitalized peace-agreement offers a glimmer of hope for children, reports of extreme violence against women and children continue, most recently in Bentiu, where more than 150 women and girls reported suffering horrific sexual assault.



4. Syria

Between January and September 2018, the UN verified the killing of 870 children – the highest number ever in the first nine months of any year since the start of the conflict in 2011. Attacks continued throughout the year, including the killing of 30 children in the eastern village of Al Shafa in November.



5. Yemen

The UN has verified 1,427 children killed or injured in attacks, including an ‘unconscionable’ attack on a school bus in Sa’ada. Schools and hospitals have come under frequent attack or been used for military purposes, denying children access to their right to education and health care. This is further fueling a crisis in a country where every 10 minutes, a child dies due to preventable diseases, and 400,000 children suffer from severe acute malnutrition.

Importance of Children's Rights

1. Children are individuals

Children are neither the possessions of parents nor of the state, nor are they mere people-in-the-making; they have equal status as members of the human family.

2. Children start life as totally dependent beings

Children must rely on adults for the nurture and guidance they need to grow towards independence. Such nurture is ideally found from adults in children's families, but when primary adult caregivers cannot meet children's needs, it is up to the State as the primary duty bearer to find an alternative in the best interests of the child.

3. The actions or inactions of government impact children more strongly than any other group in society

Practically every area of government policy – from education to public health – affects children to some degree. Short-sighted policymaking that fails to take children into account has a negative impact on the future of all members of society.

4. Children's views should be heard and considered in the political process

Children generally do not vote and do not traditionally take part in political processes. Without special attention to the opinions of children – as expressed at home and in schools, in local communities and even in governments – children's views go unheard on the many important issues that affect them now or will affect them in the future.

5. Many changes in society are having a disproportionate and negative impact on children

Transformation of the family structure, globalization, climate change, digitalization, mass migration, shifting employment patterns and a shrinking social welfare net in many countries all have strong impacts on children. The impact of these changes can be particularly devastating in situations of armed conflict and other emergencies.

6. The healthy development of children is crucial to the future well-being of any society

Because they are still developing, children are especially vulnerable – more so than adults – to poor living conditions such as poverty, inadequate health care, nutrition, safe water, housing and environmental pollution. The effects of disease, malnutrition and poverty threaten the future of children and therefore the future of the societies in which they live.

7. The costs to society of failing its children are huge

Social research findings show that children's earliest experiences significantly influence their future development. The course of their development determines their contribution, or cost, to society over the course of their lives.

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