



UNICEF

BACKGROUND GUIDE

*Protecting the rights of
children in conflict zones*



Letter from the EB:

Greetings delegates,

We take immense pleasure in welcoming you to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund being simulated at Meridian School Banjara Hills Model United Nations, 2021. We look forward to an exciting and intellectually stimulating conference.

We're glad that we have had the opportunity to serve as the members of your Executive Board and we assure you that this conference would be a great learning experience for all of you. Furthermore, we not only will share the knowledge that's been passed on to us by our mentors, but also impart all the knowledge that we have garnered in the last few years of our MUNing and on our own journey as Executive Board and delegates.

As you prepare to become honorable diplomats representing your respective nations, it is imperative for each of you to understand the volume of such a position of power. We expect all of you to display immaculate diplomacy and courtesy during as well as outside the committee. We strongly urge you to be diplomatic, not demanding. We also request you to strictly adhere to your foreign policy.

We wish you the best of luck and look forward to seeing you all in action !

Regards,

Tia Asthana Sanker,

Chairperson

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Tvishi Reddy,

Vice Chairperson

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About UNICEF -

UNICEF, also known as the United Nations International Children's Fund, is a United Nations agency responsible for providing humanitarian and developmental aid to children worldwide. The agency is among the most widespread and recognizable social welfare organizations in the world, with a presence in 192 countries and territories.

UNICEF responds in emergency situations to protect the rights of children. In coordination with United Nations partners and humanitarian agencies, UNICEF makes its unique facilities for rapid response available to its partners to relieve the suffering of children and those who provide their care. UNICEF is non-partisan and its cooperation is free of discrimination. In everything it does, the most disadvantaged children and the countries in greatest need have priority.

About the Agenda -

- What are Conflict Zones - Conflict zone refers to war or political instability that disrupts essential services such as housing, transportation, communication, sanitation, water, and health care which requires the response of people outside of the community affected

535 million children, a quarter of the world's children, live in countries affected by conflict or disasters. Nearly 50 million have been forcibly displaced from their homes, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation and violence. This is the issue we'd like to address for the duration of the conference. As a child-focused agency committed to reaching the world's most vulnerable children, we need to ask ourselves two

questions: *How can children be better protected from the physical and psychological effects of armed conflict, including being recruited as child soldiers?* and *what should we do in these places to impact children more beneficially?*

There are an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 child soldiers worldwide according to the Human Rights Watch. Children are being or have been recruited to be soldiers in many countries including Yemen, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Colombia, Myanmar, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, and Sudan. According to Save the Children, roughly half of the child soldiers in the world are girls. These girl soldiers can become forced to marry older soldiers.

If children are not forced into battle during conflict, they are often forced out of their homes and into refugee camps in neighboring cities or bordering countries. Once in refugee camps, conditions are often poor for children, where they often face exploitation, lack of food, denial of education, and cross-border attacks. If children are internally displaced, they do not fit the internationally accepted definition of a refugee and therefore do not receive the same protection as those who have crossed international borders

ii. The biggest danger is malnutrition, and children are often sent outside the camps to look for work, where they risk being abducted, or murdered by those fighting within a conflict. Furthermore, drugs may also be used on child soldiers to curb their hunger that can lead to drug addiction as well as psychological and emotional problems. When a conflict ends, soldiers need to be disarmed and demobilized. After that, children must be reintegrated into society. This includes ensuring that the children receive primary education again. Children can also become desensitized to extreme

violence and need assistance in separating their identity from their former violent one that they developed as soldiers.

Being in armed conflict also creates psychological and emotional pain, especially for children who lose family members, and even more so for children who are forced to kill others. Finally, girls ,if they were not combatants, are unable to receive the same reintegration services from NGOs.

PALESTINE-

In 2013, the Committee on the Rights of the Child – referencing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict –declared itself “highly concerned yet again by the fact that the children of both camps involved in the conflict continue to be killed or wounded, and the children living in the Palestinian-occupied territory represent a disproportionate number of these victims.”

The State of Israel is responsible for enforcing the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Israel as well as in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. In fact, according to the International Court of Justice it is – as the occupying power – responsible for the human rights situation in Palestine as well. However, the Israeli state refuses to recognize this obligation. Consequentially, numerous child rights violations have taken place and remain unpunished.

Main problems faced by children in Palestine:

Child victims of war

Poverty

Discrimination

Rights:

Right to Education

Right to Health Care

Right to water

<https://www.humanium.org/en/palestine/>

YEMEN-

Children are the primary victims of the crisis. According to the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting on grave child rights violations, from March 2015 to March 2019, more than 7,522 children have been verified as killed or maimed since the start of the conflict and more than 3,309 boys have been recruited into armed forces and groups; however, the actual figures are likely to be higher. Children remain under extreme risk of death or injury from unexploded ordinances, landmines and explosive remnants of war.

More than 7,500 children have been verified as killed or maimed since the start of the conflict.

In 2018, the Country Task Force on Monitoring and Reporting verified 1,321 incidents of grave violations against children. The escalation of hostilities in Al

Hudaydah governorate resulted in a dramatic increase of children killed and injured because of the conflict. Specifically, data increased from around 100 child casualties in 2017 to over 500 child casualties in 2018.

The verification of recruitment and use of children decreased by 60 per cent in 2018 compared to 2017 due to security threats and access constraints on humanitarian actors and human rights monitors. Education and health related incidents increased by 56 per cent compared to the previous year; 46 per cent of the education and health related incidents were attacks on schools and hospitals and 44 per cent were the military use of schools and hospitals.

According to the number of houses built in 2003 and the family health survey of the same year children ages newborn-18 years old make up 55% of the population. This segment of the population which makes up half the present and all of the future is affected greatly by the weak economic growth and increasing poverty. **This is in addition to the high dropout rate at different stages especially among females.** Child labor has increased due to the weak economical and social conditions and the continuous deterioration of living conditions. The health situation is not any better, the death rates of newborns and children aged 1-4 are among the highest in the world. The family health survey (2003) reported that 82.4% of deaths are between 0-1 years of age, and 32.5% are between 1-4 years of age. Diseases such as Malaria, Typhoid, and Diarrhea remain major causes of death. There is one doctor for every 6372 patients and one bed for each 1662 patients. In addition, the sale of children across borders has become widespread. These children are endangered and in many cases sexually abused.

<https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/46f146ec0.pdf>

SYRIA-

When 15 boys were detained in Syria for scrawling anti-government graffiti on walls in Deraa, a city in Southwest Syria, news of their arrest sparked protests. The protesters called not only for the release of the boys, but for greater political freedom, and railed against government corruption.

When they were finally released, bruised and bloodied and talking about the torture they suffered, the boys' stories helped fuel protests that were rapidly spreading across Syria.

Those boys, aged 10 to 15, were arrested in March 2011 and the protests for their release grew into the demonstrations and brutal repression that sparked the bloody civil war in Syria.

Now, children are still paying the price of war. In the northwestern province of Idlib alone, nearly 600,000 children have been forcibly displaced since December 2019 by the latest Syrian-Russian joint military offensive in the province. Desperate parents sometimes even find themselves resorting to child marriage to try to ensure a future for their daughters.

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/03/13/children-syria>

Research Sources:

- UNICEF Children in Armed Conflict:

http://www.unicef.org/emerg/index_childsoldiers.html

- Human Rights Watch page on Child Soldiers:

<https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights/child-soldiers>

- Amnesty International page on armed conflict: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/armed-conflict>

- Convention on the Rights of the Child: <http://www.unicef.org/crc/>

- UN Conference on DDR and Stability in Africa:

<http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/ddr2.htm>

- Invisible Children: <http://invisiblechildren.com/>