

GLOBAL REPORT ON CHILDREN 2018

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İHH HUMANITARIAN AND SOCIAL RESEARCH CENTER
مركز البحوث الإنسانية و الاجتماعية

Ramadan 2018

The current chaotic state of the globe, and the wars and internal conflicts arising out of the policies implemented by the states in line with their imperialist goals, have led to irreparable physical and psychological damage on vulnerable children. The difficulties children encounter in terms of access to nourishment, shelter, clothing and clean drinking water, as well as the medical support to prevent diseases, have a traumatic effect on the physique and psychology of this particularly defenseless group. This report considers the elements leading to the suffering of children, regardless of the diversity of the causes, and also highlights the abuses they suffer. It aims to present a picture of what being a child means in the globalizing world of the 21st century.

Introduction

Albert Camus, the famed Algerian author said that “the 17th century was the century of mathematics, the 18th that of the physical sciences, and the 19th that of biology. However, our 20th century is the century of fear”. His intention was to express the state of a world boiling over with war. In fact, rather than being a specific definition, this quote is representative of the age we live in.

The political crises, economic injustices, social decay and the loss of moral values has brought about a distinct age. The Syrian civil war, the Russian oppression endured by the peoples of Caucasia, the state of the Palestinians, and the invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq by the US, are



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just a few examples of the violent events which have occurred right before our eyes during our times. Today, we live in a world of stark contrasts which, on the one hand, is inhabited by people suffering from hunger and poverty, while others spend millions to lose excess weight. We breathe the air of an age where even the most important ethical considerations are neglected, and where immorality is presented under the guise of defending rights.

It is children, the most vulnerable segment of any society, who suffer the most from all of the modern world's crises, abuses, moral decay and poverty. This report considers the elements leading to the suffering of children, regardless of the diversity of the causes, and also highlights the abuses they suffer. It aims to present a picture of what being a child means in the globalizing world of the 21st century.

This report is based on the view that “one cannot speak of a meaningful life without hope for the future, maturity, and progress”. It aims to reveal how children's hopes for the future, in terms of their development and progress, are suffocated through the hunger, poverty, abuse and neglect suffered by this most important segment of any society.

This report aims to draw attention to some of the human rights violations children endure all around this ever-globalizing world. These include the heart-breaking state of children kidnapped or deceived by terrorist groups for use in battlefields and the suffering of children in the face of the deadly famines and droughts of Africa.

The study you are reading now also discusses the physical, psychological and moral problems affecting the development of children as a result of the violence, abuse, poverty and the denial of the right to education. The report also ponders the question of whether the irreparable and severe traumatic effects of all these problems triggered by the serious humanitarian crises pose significant threats to society at large.

Convention on Children's Rights

The protection of children is an essential part of their entitlement to love and compassion as “fellow human beings” within society.¹ Providing suitable means for the physical, psychological, mental and ethical development of children is among the fundamental obligations of any modern society. Children are naturally fragile and defenseless and therefore need protection based on statutory rules. Such rules should be of a character compatible with the natural rights and liberties of children while ensuring their honor and dignity. This concept of rights, which are crucial not only for children but for the very future of the society, has for a very long time been a legal consideration. Yet, child law, in terms of the “rules regulating the rights of the children” is only a recent introduction to the literature.

As a domain of law where perspective regarding children is reviewed and revised, child law is a young discipline which is undergoing continuous change in light of pressing needs. In a limited sense, child law can be described as the rules that regulate the duties that exist between a child and his or her parents. The responsibility of the state is to ensure the rights that a child are entitled to expect of his or her parents. As well as being compelled to intervene in the face of any irregularity in the exercise of the rights, the state is also obliged to ensure that the child's rights are exercised for his or her benefit.

The modern state's duties to the child therefore include more than exercising oversight over the parents. The state is also required to nurture children's natural abilities, as well as ensuring their economic and social welfare.² Whether the state itself is responsible for dealing with violations of children's rights had, for a long time, been a matter of debate within international law. However, the ever-globalizing world, changing borders, wars caused by conflicting interests of the states, and the rise of terror,

has increased the suffering of children to new heights and made the internationalization of child law a necessity.

The first institutionalized efforts in the West to achieve this aim began in 1920 with the establishment of the International Aid Organization for children. The organization initially aimed to only help with the needs of children in countries ravaged by wars. However, a better planned and more comprehensive children's rights program developed over time. Developments led to the "Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child", which was drafted by the General Assembly of the League of Nations on September 26, 1924. This document marks the first comprehensive international regulation concerning children.

Unfortunately, attempts to provide an international framework for the rights of the child were disrupted by World War II. Following the disregarding of children's rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was adopted by the United Nations (UN) and established on 24 October, 1945, there was the need for a new international regulatory framework regarding the rights of the child. Efforts culminated in the unanimous adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child by the UN General Assembly in its session of 20 November, 1959, which was attended by representatives from 78 countries. This process, which began in 1924 with the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child, took its final form with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, dated 20 November, 1989.

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child came into effect on the 2 September, 1990. All Islamic countries, including Turkey, are parties to this convention. It has the highest number of participatory states of any human rights convention. The fundamental principle of the convention is that in all actions concerning children, the best interests of the child shall be the primary consideration. The convention recognizes the right of every child to a standard of

living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, and moral development, regardless of his or her race, language, religion and gender. It is the responsibility of the child's guardians to provide the required conditions. However, if the responsible persons or states prove to be inadequate in the performance of these obligations and responsibilities, other states, which are parties to the convention, shall assume the responsibilities.

The Convention on the Rights of the Child, which considers the children's access to education, nutrition, accommodation and all other basic human needs as inalienable rights, and which provide guarantees against exploitation and conscription, was not ratified by the USA. Considering the current suffering endured by children caught up in wars nowadays, the USA's attitude, which has receive a huge volume of criticism from the global public, is puzzling to say the least.

Wars and Their Impact on Children

War is one of the primary causes of human rights violations. The state of war is defined in literature as an explicitly declared monopoly of armed violence that takes place between competing political forces within a state or nation with the purpose of breaking the will of the opposing force. However, this definition began to be questioned during the Cold War which lead to a bipolar world order that ended with the collapse of Soviet Russia in 1990. The system that followed the collapse of the Soviet regime lead to a different set of security and threat perceptions, which in turn produced a new set of conflicts based on ethnic and religious causes. The conflicts which have arisen from these changes have produced the most primitive form of hatred, and the proliferation of violence has also created transnational armed groups. What's more, the wars of the modern era are being waged, not on isolated or distant battle fields or between opposing countries,

but over wide geographical areas in the form of proxy wars. This has led to the loss of the lives of thousands and even millions, and made ever rising numbers of civilians routine targets in these conflicts.

Child Victims of War

Today, most of the harm inflicted by armed conflicts around the globe is suffered by children, who account for the vast majority of the civilian losses in conflict zones. Political conflicts between states, rivalries between various terrorist groups, and even wars that are the result of the crystallization of radical perceptions lead to injuries, disabilities, and even the death of children. For example, according to sources, the Cold War resulted in the death of more than 100,000 children, with more than 2 million suffering permanent injuries.³

Even though a quarter of a century has gone by since the violence which caused the suffering of those civilians, and of children in particular, has occurred, the violence has not ended but has, in fact, increased. According to a study from 2013, more than 2.7 million children lost their lives due to inadequate healthcare and nutrition caused by the volatile environment brought about by the internal conflicts and wars within the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁴ According to a report by the UN, the last two weeks of 2017 saw 345 Palestinian children injured by the guns of Israeli soldiers. In that country, between 500 to 700 children aged between 10-12 are arrested and put in prison by Israeli defense forces each year; with 75% of them suffering various forms of physical and psychological violence. 2017 also saw the killing of 17 Palestinian children by Israeli soldiers.

During the period 2004-2009, US drone strikes in Pakistan led to the death of 129 children. The period 2009-2016, in turn, saw the US increase the severity of air strikes in the region by nearly a factor of eight, leading to the death of 78 children.⁵

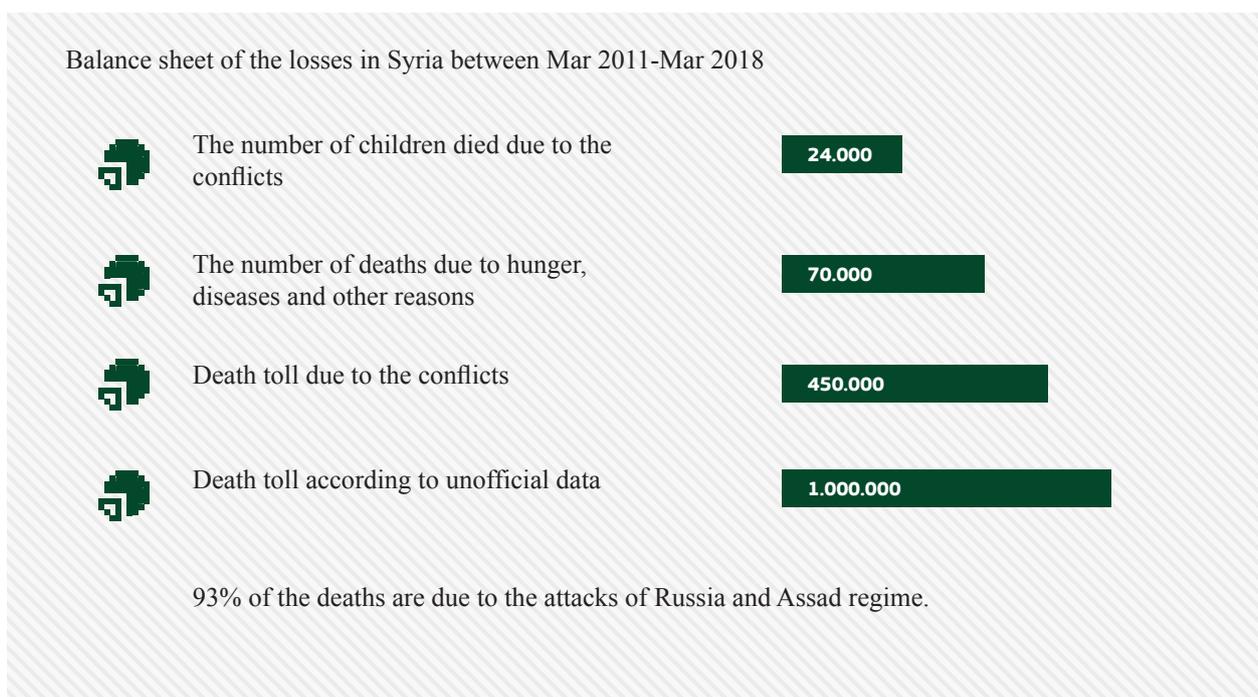
The situation in Afghanistan for children is no different. According to the report, Children and Armed Conflict, which was published by the UN in 2017, the armed conflicts between the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces and the Taliban in 2016 only further deteriorated the existing situation of children in the country. The conflicts in 2015 led to a 24% increase in the number of children dying or being injured due to conflicts, and this number increased to 3,512 in the year 2016. This figure indicates that children account for one in every three of civilian losses.

The same report revealed that the number of children affected by the wars in the Central African Republic also saw an increase in 2016. Stray bullets, stabbing and explosives left by the military led to 32 children being injured and 34 being killed. The same year saw 55 girls in Central Africa suffer various forms of sexual violence, while attacks on schools continued unabated. The same report records the death of 229 children and the injuring of 181 more due to armed conflicts in Iraq, which saw intense clashes throughout the year 2016. There was also the case of one 17-year old boy suffering a sexual attack by someone affiliated with an unidentified armed group. As with the case in Central Africa, terror groups in Iraq also organize attacks within schools. These have led to the death of many teachers and students. Lebanon has also seen its share of conflicts between violent groups. According to UN data for 2017, a total of eight children in Lebanon, four boys and four girls, died after they had been caught in the middle of conflicts. Conflicts between armed groups have also damaged the country's schools. Suffering ever-present threats to their lives in the midst of wars and conflicts, the children cannot continue their education due to growing and recurring acts of violence. A clear example affected Lebanon when the armed conflicts around the Ayn el-Helwe refugee camp in 2017 disrupted the education of more than 10,000 students.⁶

The events in Syria since March 2011 represent yet another striking example of the bleak picture the summary above tries to underline. The war which has occurred due to a disproportionate use of force on the part of the Baath regime, which has never had a commendable human rights record, is now in its seventh year. Recent years have seen the civil war in the country between the opposition and the regime forces evolving into a chaotic conflict amongst numerous states engaging in proxy wars. It is evident that the attacks against civilians, including but not limited to those against children, perpetrated by the forces of the regime and those of the states engaged in proxy wars, are now of a character which is best called war crimes.

Wars waged without any distinction made between soldiers, women, or children have seen the death of 1 million, according to reports by independent sources. By March 2018, the region saw at least 450,000 people die due to conflicts, with a further 70,000 dying due to hunger, diseases and similar causes. According to figures by Syrian Human Rights Observatory, Russia and

the Assad regime caused 93% of 24,000 child and civilian deaths between March 2011 and March 2018.⁷ Recent years in particular saw a rise in the intensity of the conflict, leading to the highest rate of child deaths in Syria in the year 2017. The first months of 2018, in turn, led to the death of 1,000 children due to armed conflicts and various other forms of suffering. According to data provided by the UN, 3.3 million children are estimated to face the hazards posed by war activities. The figures regarding the injuries and disabilities suffered by children lacking access to essential medical and psychological care grow worse with each passing day. In such an environment, disabled children who have lost their parents, loved ones and relatives, in turn, are exposed to higher rates of violence, and have great difficulties accessing basic services such as healthcare and education.⁸



The toppling of Ali Abdullah Saleh who occupied the post of head of the state of Yemen for many years, due to a series of events including the occupation of expansive regions of the country including the capital Sana'a by Houthis who are members of the Shia sect, has led to a deepening humanitarian crisis in the country. The last three years saw 15,000 air strikes hit Yemen and more than 5,000 children dying or

becoming injured. In addition to all these child deaths suffered in these attacks, since October 2016 a total of 1,698 children are reported to have suffered grave human rights violations, with more than 11 million children needing urgent aid.⁹ Moreover, 400,000 children in the country suffer from malnutrition, and more than 2 million are reported to be unable to continue their education.



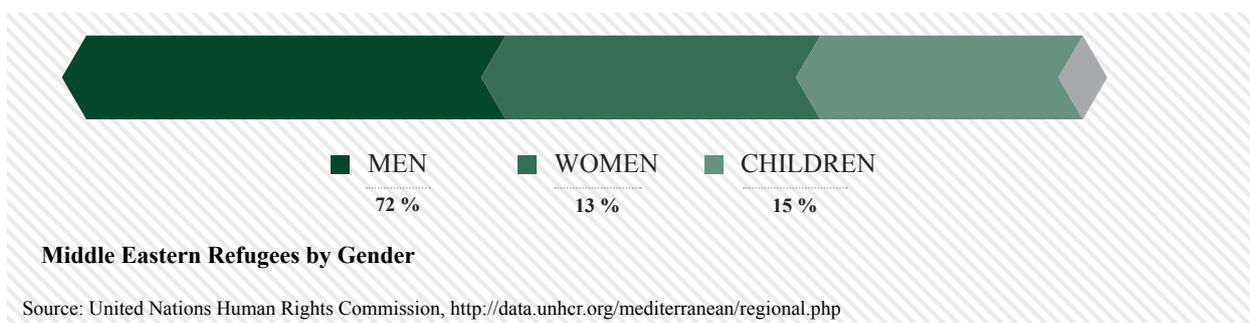
Since July 2016, rising tensions in Kashmir, which has been an ongoing problem since the independence of Pakistan from India in 1947, has put the lives of children in that region in jeopardy. According to the Civil Society Coalition Report for Jammu and Kashmir, which was published in 2017, the events unfolding in Kashmir have led to 451 deaths, 109 of which were civilians. 14 of the civilians who died were children.¹¹

Child Refugees

Today, there are more than 50 million displaced children who need protection. 28 million of these children have been displaced due to wars and ex-

treme poverty. This figure includes the millions of children attempting to flee from the internal strife affecting a dozen countries, including Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and South Sudan. The number of children who are suffering due to the chaos in Syria and Iraq alone have reached 14 million.¹²

Now in its seventh year, the Syrian war has caused two thirds of the population to flee from their homes. According to a number of studies, 5.6 million Syrians have immigrated to neighboring countries, while a further 6.1 million are now displaced people living inside the country. Out of the 5.6 million refugees who have immigrated, 3.6 million are women and children, while 1.3 million are adult men.¹³



The future of the Syrians who have found refuge in a number of countries since the advent of the conflict still remains uncertain. The basic human rights of these people, such as nutrition, shelter, and education, are under threat. Today, 1.7 million Syrian child refugees are unable to continue their education. Hosting more than 3.5 million Syrians, Turkey tries hard to provide education to thousands of Syrian children and young people. More than 610,000 refugee children continue to receive education in Turkey, both at schools operated by the Ministry of Education, and at establishments established by Syrian educators. To date, 320,000 child refugees have benefited from the Conditional Education Assistance Program supported by the UN.¹⁴

The number of children who have lost their parents in conflicts ravaging all corners of the globe, from the Middle East to Asia and Africa, is now in the millions. Today, the global number of registered orphans has reached 153 million, although unofficial sources suggest figures in excess of 400 million. The risks of violence, exploitation, abuse and negligence that these refugee children are exposed to are only multiplied upon the death of, or separation from, their guardians.

For instance, in the first half of 2016, approximately 26,000 children who reached to the border of the US were found to be unaccompanied by any adults.¹⁵ Children account for one of every three asylum seekers in Europe. Also in 2016, more than 63,000 unaccompanied

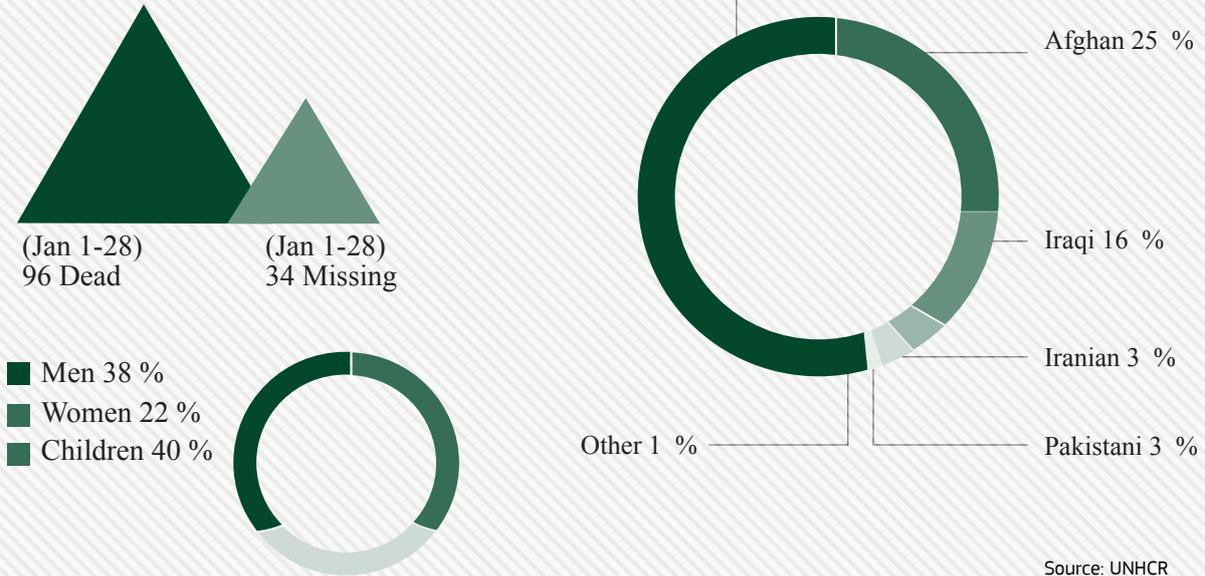
children reached Europe.¹⁶ Since the outbreak of the refugee crisis following the war in Syria, 480,000 children have crossed the border with Greece. 5,174 of these were not accompanied by any adults.¹⁷ During these exhausting journeys, the children are exposed to many problems such as violence and sexual abuse, whereas the greatest danger is that posed by human traffickers. According to studies, tens of thousands of the children who had arrived in Europe after overcoming such major obstacles were lost.¹⁸ 96,465 of all the children who filed asylum applications in European countries in 2015 are now unaccounted for.¹⁹

A lack of adequate measures by Europe for the protection of refugee children have left them exposed to physical and psychological exploitation. The case in Italy is, unfortunately, not much better than the one playing out in Greece. According to a study carried out in January-March 2017, 94% of the 3,714 children who arrived in Italy were not accompanied by any adult.²⁰ In the period 2011-2016, out of the 62,672 children who tried to reach Italy without being accompanied by an adult, 17% were citizens of Eritrea, 13% were Egyptians, and 9% were from Gambia and Somali.²¹ Furthermore, 5,000 child refugees are reported to be lost in Italy.²² The picture in France is no different from that of the rest of Europe. Approximately 1,000 children who were registered in the refugee camps in that country are now unaccounted for.²³ The concerns about the subjection of these children to human trafficking in Europe are growing.

Greek Tragedy

The numbers behind the continuing refugee crisis in Greece (2016)

Total arrivals: 126.166
(Jun 1-Mar 2)



Approximately 33% of the people in question in Germany, the country that stands out as the one hit hardest by the flow of refugees towards Europe, are children.²⁴ According to a report published in 2017, more than 350,000 children who applied for asylum in Germany are housed at unsafe locations while reviews are pending, and many may be exposed to physical, psychological and sexual violence during that uncertain period.

Child Soldiers

Representing yet another form of suffering brought about by war, the use of child soldiers is one of the most distressing consequences of these devastating wars. The internal anger and resentment that the children are unable to dispel is exploited by terrorist groups. This makes it easier for children to be abused as spies, scouts, sexual slaves, human shields and so on.

As child soldiers are deemed “cheap” and “exchangeable” tools, they are vulnerable to manipulation and are often rendered active perpetrators of violence. The social fragmentation

and underdevelopment of poorer countries has created a pool of children exposed to abduction and voluntary participation in armed groups. As the developments in technology make smaller, more accurate, and easier to use deadly weapons possible, non-government groups have begun to see children as a cost-free and effective means to quickly and easily increase their power. Furthermore, political motives, e.g. protecting oneself or the family, as well as the generating of income, securing revenge, or just a desire for adventure also lead to an increase in the number of child soldiers around the globe.

At the moment, Africa and Asia have the greatest number of child soldiers. However, children are used as “combatants” in Latin America and the Middle East as well. According to the report *Children in Armed Conflicts*, submitted by the UN Secretary General to the UN Security Council and General Assembly on 15 May, 2014, the government authorities of Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Myanmar, Somali, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, and Yemen all forcibly recruit children for armed conflicts. The same report mentions that Afghanistan, the

Democratic Republic of Congo, the Philippines, Iraq, Columbia, Mali, Myanmar, Nigeria, the Central African Republic, Somali, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Uganda, and Yemen as the countries where child combatants operate outside the government's armed units. In a nutshell, the recruiting and use of children for armed conflicts by 51 non-state groups can be seen in 15 countries. According to UN data, in 2015, the Taliban and ISIS were using 3,000 child soldiers in Afghanistan. Even though 2016 saw a decline, in comparison with 2015, in the rate of children being affected by the severity of the conflict, the Central African Republic nonetheless witnessed an increase in the rate of the recruitment of children for armed conflict. It was revealed that in previous years, 168 boys in Iraq were used as child soldiers by ISIS, PYD and YPG forces. In 2016, 463 children in Iraq were arrested on the grounds of affiliation with armed groups. A similar state of affairs prevails in Lebanon. According to data provided by the UN, dozens of children are involved in terrorist organizations. Children aged 12-14 are known to be on armed patrol in the Palestinian camps in South Lebanon. Today, in Lebanon, many children are accused of, and arrested and tried for, being accessory to terror related activities due to their involvement with armed groups in Lebanon or Syrian Arab Republic.²⁵

The abuses children are currently facing in Yemen are truly concerning in scale. In addition to countless children who have died due to the internal conflict ravaging the country, thousands aged 10-18 were also recruited by the groups involved in the conflict.²⁶

Destruction Caused by the War on Children

In short, wars affect children in two major ways: The first is related to the destruction and abuse suffered by children, and the death of their parents, as a result of war. The second is related

to the suffering caused by their use as child soldiers in wars.

Wars, which top the list of triggers of grave humanitarian crises, cause irreparable psycho-social destruction that affects the whole society. The traumatic effects of grave human rights violations occurring during war can leave permanent marks on the physical, psychological, and moral development of children. Direct or indirect exposure to acts of terror cause children to experience the threat of death. Children who suffer due to wars, and who are characterized by limited cognitive and emotional skills, have difficulty in coping with the hardships they face, and may, as a result, engage in certain aggressive attitudes and behaviors such as anger and other forms of agitation.

These children, who desperately need the interest and affection of loving adults, but who have lost their families due to the conflict, can convince themselves that they are partly to blame for the war around them, while chastising themselves for not doing enough to stop it. Deprived of their right to education, being forced to live in refugee camps with other displaced people, and condemned to a life in poverty till their circumstances normalize, the children often exhibit uncontrolled anger. This can lead to their isolation from society.

Life is even more difficult for the children who have lost a limb, their sight, hearing, or another cognitive capacity during the war. These children continue to endure problems in attending schools and socialization even after their original problems have ended. In the light of the slim chances of ever being able to put the psychological and physical damage that they have endured, as well as the sexual abuses they may have suffered, the victimized children remain outside world societies. They constitute a group which will never recover their original potential, even after the end the conflict they are in.



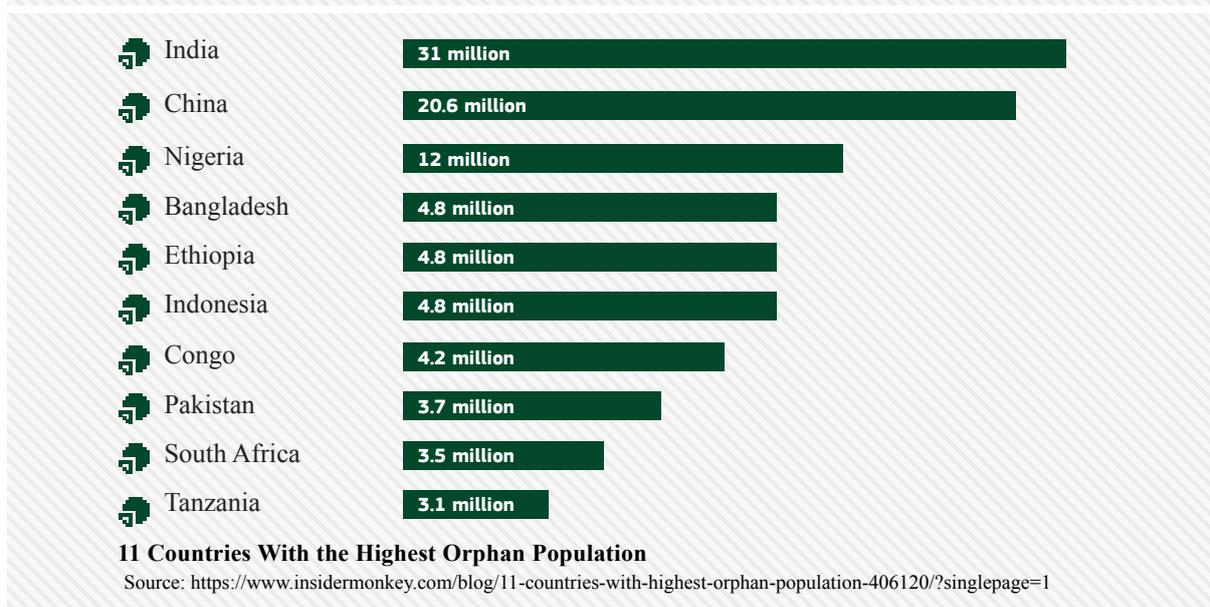
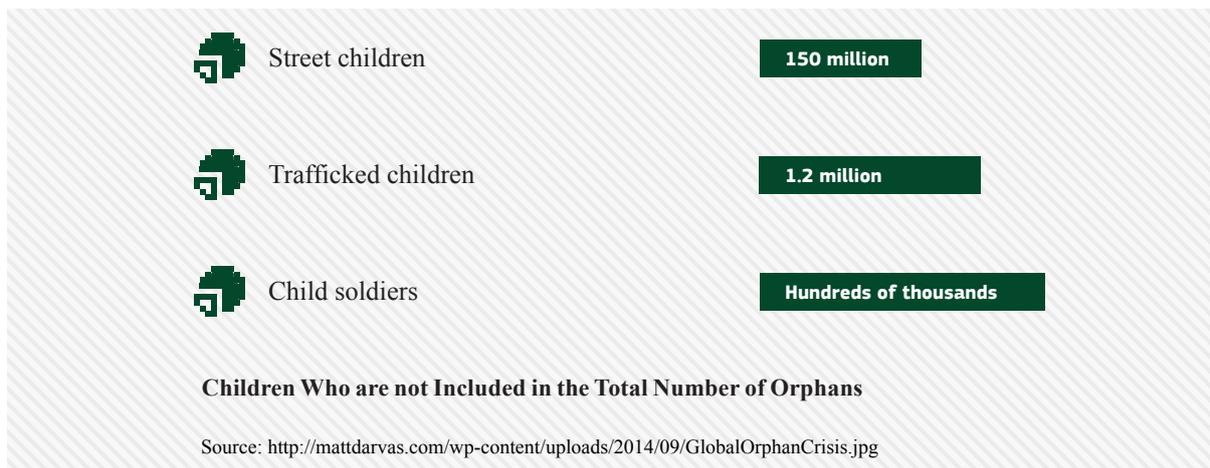
Orphans Around the World and Their Status

According to UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Fund), any child aged between 0-17 who has lost his or parents is considered an orphan. Among all of the losses that can be endured, the one with the gravest impact on the child is the death of the mother or the father. Such a death not only constitutes a loss of a person who loves and meets the daily needs of the child, it also causes complete chaos in the psychology of the child. Studies show that children who have lost one or both of their parents are more inclined to suffer psychological problems, as compared to their peers.

Wars, invasions, conflicts etc. are all crises

which lead to an increase in the number of orphans. Currently, the crises prevailing in Eastern Turkistan, Syria, Nigeria, Iraq, Somali, Mali, Sudan, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Arakan, and Pattani leads to ever increasing numbers of orphans in these areas. Natural disasters also leave behind many orphans. The tsunami that hit South Asia, the earthquakes in Haiti and Pakistan, and the drought in East Africa, have all left millions of children orphans.

Today, 153 million orphans are registered around the globe. Yet, estimates of the actual figure range above 400 million. This is because it is impossible to get an accurate number of the children who live on the streets or who have been kidnapped or conscripted.



According to the statistics provided by UNICEF in 2015, 15.1 million orphans, 95% of which are older than the age of five, have lost both parents. Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East lead the list of the places where millions of children are rendered orphans due to chronic poverty, wars, or invasions. There are 61 million orphans in Asia, followed by 52 million in Africa, 10 million in Latin America and the Caribbean, and 7.3 million in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These figures refer to children who lost either the mother or the father.²⁷

Children who have lost one or both parents as a result of the crises caused by human activities or natural reasons, and are hence left vulnerable and exposed, are defenseless in the face of any kind of abuse. Human trafficking, child soldiers, child labor, organ mafia, prostitution and beggar rings are but a few of the hazards faced by the orphans. For instance, in the period 1987-2007, 1 million children were kidnapped by the organ mafia.²⁸ Today, adoption from overseas is considered an industry, leading to the kidnapping of children, through the use of various promises, from developing countries such as Ethiopia, Cambodia, Somali, Chad, Afghanistan, China, and the Philippines. It is common knowledge that such kidnapped children are sold for cash all around the globe, including in many countries in Europe and the Americas. As noted above, hundreds of thousands of children have been conscripted either forcibly or on false premises. On the other hand, each year millions of women and children are forced into displacement by human traffickers. These people are forced to perform hard labor, being rendered virtual slaves. Such dangers affecting children, who have already had to cope with the pain of losing their parents, only further increases the material and psychological hardships they experience.

Children whose parents are alive, but are unable to provide the required support, are also considered orphans, according to UNICEF's definition.

Such children include those abandoned or neglected by one or both parents. They are forced into labor which has a negative impact on their physical and psychological development, and are left exposed to hazards such as substance abuse and organ mafia.

One of the material examples of this state of affairs is on display in Russia. The degradation of the family as an institution in a country where many children are left orphans due to historical circumstances, has led to ever increasing numbers of orphans in Russia. This is due to the shortcomings of parents in performing their obligations and the weakening of human values. Even though the number of orphans fell from 680,000 in 1945 to 644,757 in 2013, the bleakness of the picture will come a shock as anyone who compares the conditions of war with the conditions prevailing today. According to a study carried out in 2015, 83% of the orphans in Russia need protection. The statistics show that the number of orphans in Russia is extremely high compared to global averages. Approximately 50% of the children in the country (nearly 14 million) are exposed to social risks. Each year, 100,000 children join the ranks of those who need care. That figure is up from 74,700 in 2012. According to the same study, the majority of these children who are bereft of any protection by the family had been involved in a number of crimes such as substance addiction, theft and bodily harm. Only a small number were able to grow into successful individuals. The study also notes that these children had also failed in their education, and had difficulties in setting up families and acting as parents of their own children.²⁹

The US is not much better than Russia in terms of orphans. Approximately 3 million children in the country strive to maintain a life without parents. 4.1% of these children have seen their mother or father pass away. Each year approximately 22,000 babies in the US are abandoned



in hospitals, while 2,000 to 3,000 kids are left as orphans due one of the parents killing the other. 60% of these kids are assigned to foster families as a result of exposure to domestic violence and abuse, while a further 17% are again assigned to foster parents due to the death, imprisonment, disability or illness of the parents. According to figures for the year 2007, there are 72 million children in the US. 31% of the children who live without parents face poverty.³⁰ These studies reveal that the children living under such conditions have difficulties in adapting to the society, and often face violence, abuse, and ill treatment at the hands of foster families. As with the case of any orphan, these children also have difficulties in many areas of life, such as education.

The Impact Child Abuse and Neglect Has on Children

What is child abuse?

Any behavior with a negative impact on the physical and psychological health of children during their growth and development is considered child abuse and neglect. Witnessed as an act since the dawn of history and discussed extensively, child abuse became part of medical literature for the first time in 1860. As a concept, it refers to “any and all inappropriate and damaging action/inaction the children suffer due to social rules or by adults.” It is often categorized under four main groups: physical abuse, emotional abuse, sexual abuse, and child neglect. Different forms of abuse and neglect pose a major public health issue that affects families, societies, social institutions, legal systems, education systems, and sectors of business.

Among the above mentioned categories, physical abuse can be defined as the case where the child suffers non-accidental bodily injury as a result of violence. Physical abuse is also defined as any child or teenager younger than the age of 18 suffering physical harm at the hands of

their parents or the people who are acting as their guardians. Such harm can be caused by the parent or the guardian either directly by the use of hands, or by the use of hard objects, as well as by pushing, biting, or burning. Furthermore, malnutrition and failure to provide adequate clothing, care and a hygienic environment are also considered forms of physical abuse.

Emotional abuse and neglect refers to any attitudes and behaviors of the adults that can harm the personality of the child, prevent his or her emotional development, and/or humiliate him or her. Such abuse is often the most frequently experienced form of abuse affecting children and teenagers, yet it is difficult to define from a legal perspective. This kind of abuse generally occurs verbally or in the form of very severe punishment, and can at times exhibit itself as the failure to provide adequate emotional support to the child, failure to provide affection, and a failure to act in the face of any physical or sexual abuse suffered by the child. Sexual abuse refers to the abuse for sexual purposes by any adult of any child who had not yet completed her psycho-social development. Such abuse can occur through carnal interaction with the child, or through indecent exposure, peeping, or pornography.

Child Abuse Rates Around the Globe

A UN report published in 2014 on global child abuse states that one out of every 10 girls suffer sexual abuse. The report is based on data from 190 countries, and notes that in 2012, 95,000 children and teenagers were murdered.

This is the leading reason of death of boys aged 10-19 in Latin American and Caribbean countries such as Brazil, Guatemala, Colombia, Panama, and Venezuela. Reports produced by the UN again reveal that in 58 countries, 17% of children face severe physical punishments. Another noteworthy point raised in the report is the fact that three out of every 10 adults consider such punishment as a necessary element in raising a child.



Neglect

Failing, despite having the means, to provide medical care, education, shelter or other essentials for a child's healthy development.



A wider consideration on Asia with respect to child abuse rates reveals that the current state of affairs is bleak. A study carried out in Japan during the period 1994-2005 found that 1,084 children under the age of 15 were killed by their families. In Korea, between 2000 and 2003, 2,621 people under the age of 20 were murdered. A study carried out in 2009 with specific reference to Taiwan found that the parents were the perpetrator in 14.6% of cases of child death. The figures regarding the sexual abuse of children in Asia are also disconcerting. In 2005, 17.1% of children younger than the age of 18 were forced into sexual intercourse; and in 2007, this figure rose to 21%. In another study focused on Asia, 67.1% of families in China were found to engage in emotional ill treatment of their children between the ages of 3-6.³¹ Another appalling instance of child abuse can be observed in Indonesia, one of the poorest nations of East Asia. Some families in the Western Java region of Indonesia, which lacks a sustainable economic infrastructure, are economically forced into selling their daughters to persons or groups engaged in the trafficking of women in exchange of substantial sums of money or a luxury flat. The heartbreaking suffering of these girls, some as young as 15, who are forced to prostitution, is deemed natural by almost all involved. Indeed, some families even celebrate the birth of a girl, thinking that she

would provide them a source of income should they suffer economic hardships in the future. The girls can avoid such treatment only if they get married. This deprives them of the opportunity to imagine a future for themselves and to continue their education. Furthermore, these girls who are considered by their parents as a means to generate income, are likely to suffer health problems, even AIDS or similar deadly diseases, due to the occupation they have been forced into.³²

26.3% of the children in South Africa are reported to suffer sexual harassment / rape. A study carried out in Israel revealed that 22.2% of the students suffered physical abuse, while 29.1% suffered emotional abuse.³³ Again in Israel, according to a report published in 2015 by State Comptroller Yosef Shapira, 6,000 children suffered sexual abuse and 13,000 suffered physical abuse. According to a report prepared by Haifa University in 2013, more than half of Israeli children were found to be exposed to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. According to a report drawn up on 8,239 Jewish and 2,274 Arab children, 48.5% of children living in Israel suffer abuse.³⁴ According to another report published by the Human Rights Organization, Palestinian children taken into custody by Israeli police face harassment. Nine cases of sexual abuse have been documented since 2015. The report also noted the children suffering major traumas due to physical and sexual abuse applied by Israeli soldiers on Palestinian children.



The child abuse rates in Europe are very high compared to global averages. According to research, 60% of pornographic images and video recordings of child abuse originate from Europe. In 2015, the rate of pornographic videos and images online that involve the abuse of children rose to 57% in North America. The Netherlands tops the list of countries where obscene material with children as the subject are the most prevalent. In 2015-2016, 4.4 million images and videos of child abuse were put on web sites in Europe, while the figure rose to 8.2 million by 2017.³⁵

Each year, 50,000 cases are filed on this issue in Australia, one of the countries where child abuse is rampant. In the US, one in every five children reportedly suffer sexual attacks.³⁶ According to a number of studies, unless measures are taken, 500,000 babies born in the US face the very high risk of experiencing sexual abuse by the age of 18.³⁷ 28.3% of the children living in the US were found to be subjected to physical abuse, whereas 20.7% suffered from sexual abuse and 10.6% suffered from emotional abuse. Researchers found that in 2014, 1,580 children living in the US and aged 4-5 age died as a result of abuse they suffered. 70% of children aged two and below who suffered

abuse died as a result of the incident. In the US, 80% of the children who die as a result of the maltreatment they have suffered have been killed by their parents.³⁸ According to another study carried out in the US in 2012, 3.4 million child abuse cases were referred to local child protection services. The same report noted that 1,640 children who suffered neglect or physical and sexual abuse lost their lives. Finally, the same source reports that 70% of the children suffering from maltreatment are younger than the age of three.³⁹

According to a study carried out in 2012 in the UK, one in every 200 adults in the UK are pedophiles, and each year more than 16,000 cases of child abuse are filed.⁴⁰ In 2013, 4,171 offences of child abuse in the UK were aimed against girls under the age of 13, while in 1,267 offences, the victim were boys under the age of 13.⁴¹ In the UK, one in every 20 children suffer sexual abuse, while 90% of the victims were found to have been abused by someone they know.⁴² According to another study carried out between 2015-2016, 4.8% of children under the age of 18 in the UK were murdered. 2015-2016 saw 56 children under the age of 18 murdered in the UK.⁴³

SEXUAL ABUSE CLAIMS CONCERNING UN PEACEKEEPERS

UN peacekeeping corps who have been assigned to provide security for civilians in many conflict zones of the globe, do themselves sometimes face accusations of sexual abuse.

MINUSCA (UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission) peacekeepers have been accused of involvement in 171 sexual abuse cases since 2015.

2014: In 2014, French soldiers posted in the Central African Republic were claimed to have sexually abused six children. Burundian and Gabonese soldiers affiliated with MINUSCA were also claimed to have been involved in the cases of abuse.

2015: 38 sexual abuse accusations were raised against MINUSCA peacekeepers in the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic.

2016: According to UN sources, more than 25 cases of sexual abuse involving Burundian and Moroccan soldiers took place in January and March. It is noted that nearly 100 new cases arose in the subsequent months.

In January 2016, MINUSCA decided to order the return of 925 soldiers from the Democratic Republic of Congo due to them being accused of sexual abuse.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid bin Ra'ad Zeid al-Husseini, noted that statements were taken from a total of 108 individuals who were said to be victims of abuse, the majority of which were children.

According to a study carried out in Northern Ireland in 2014, 1,223 children under the age of 18 suffered sexual abuse. That figure rose by 26% in 2015, with the number of children under the age of 18 who suffered sexual abuse rising to 1,809.⁴⁴

In Europe, since 2003, a total of 18 million children suffered sexual violence, with 44 million suffering physical violence and 55 million being the victim of emotional violence. Each year this led to the death of at least 850 children under the age of 15. According to another report compiled 2014, 24% of the children injured due to physical violence died as a result.⁴⁵ In Europe, the rate of abused children being murdered ranges from 20% to 33%.

Since 2008, violence and abuse against children is on the rise in Europe. According to a report prepared in 2013, 2.1 million calls received by a call center set up as a “Child Assistance” hotline were initiated by children who had suffered abuse and were asking for help.⁴⁶

With reference to the specific cases of child abuse occurring worldwide, one can again observe that the problem is a universal one: The sexual abuse committed by the priest Bernard Preynat at the Catholic Church in Lyon, France is but one example of tens of incidents which were referred to the courts. The sentences issued in 2015 against 133 US military personnel due to sexual crimes against children are also of note.



The cases of harassment and rape suffered in the refugee camps which provide shelter to millions of people who have fled the Syrian war present yet another dimension of the issue. For instance, seven boys in the age group 14-16 suffered rape in the France's Calais Refugee Camp which was closed down in 2016. This is a clear indication of the extent of violations of children's rights on a global scale.

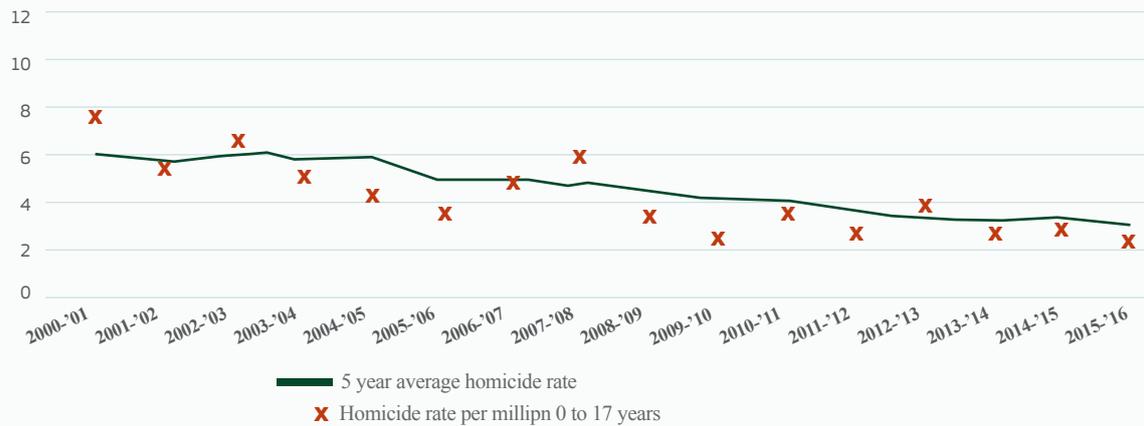
The scandals involving certain aid agencies are noteworthy in terms of depicting the scale of sexual abuse in the West. For instance, certain employees of the OXFAM agency based in the UK were forced to resign due to their involvement in sexual abuse cases relating to victims in countries such as Chad and Haiti. Ronald Van Hauwermeiren, an executive of OXFAM who has admitted horrible abuses against children in Chad in the period 2006-2009 and in Haiti after 2010, is but one of the names involved. Concerned about the possibility of losing endowments granted by the European Commission, OXFAM chose to cover up the reports. Once the case was known to the general public, the organization was content with terminating the association of the people claimed to be involved, thus seeking to settle the matter by forcing all three individuals to resign. However, Hauwermeiren still serves as Action Against Hunger's country director for Bangladesh. In another case, World Vision based in the US, has admitted that some of its staff members forced earthquake victims in Haiti into sexual intercourse in return for aid.

In Turkey, the problem presents itself first in the family household, followed by schools, security forces, streets, child-care centers, institutions where arrested and convicted children are held, and the workplaces where children are employed. According to a report issued by the Social Services and Child Protection Agency, covering the years 2006-2011, 18.6% of the children for whom protection orders were

issued had been granted such protection as a result of abuse and neglect at the hands of their parents. According to statistics by the General Directorate of Security, in the period 2002-2005, 27,782 children aged between 0-10 were brought to protection centers due to being victims of crime. In another set of statistics from a study carried out in eight provinces of Turkey, with a total of 16,100 children aged between 4-12, 34.6% of girls and 32.5% of boys suffer physical abuse. It is understood that 77% of abusers were family members, with relatives accounting for a further 11%, and other persons in contact with the child (teacher, babysitter etc.) accounting for 2%.⁴⁷ According to data from the Ministry of Justice, in 2014 alone there were a total of 40,000 "child harassment cases" in Turkey. To date, 24,285 of these cases have been concluded, with 13,968 cases leading to convictions. It is reported that each month approximately 650 sexual abuse cases are submitted to forensics authorities.

According to statistical data gathered by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK), the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Family and Social Policies, the responses submitted to parliamentary questions, research carried out by non-governmental organizations and academic staff, as well as from news items published on daily newspapers, Turkey ranks high among all countries in terms of the prevalence of child porn. The statistics state that there has been approximately a 400% increase in cases of sexual assault, harassment and rape against children in the period 2008-2013. According to statistics, the number of cases of sexual harassment, assault and abuse committed against children was 7,500 in 2008, rising to 13,812 in 2009 and 18,334 in 2011.

In Turkey, the average age of children suffering from sexual abuse is 13.7. 71.6% of the children suffering abuse are aged between 14-17. 88.3% of these are girls. 52.9% of the children who



Homicide rate per million children aged 0 to 17 years in England

Source: "How Safe are Our Children?", NSPCC, 2017, p. 18.

suffered from abuse drop out of education. 4.7% of these children also suffer from mental disabilities, while 7.3% have also previously suffered abuse. 49.3% of all abuse occurs through force, with threats accounting for a further 30%. 44% of abuse cases are premeditated. 41.3% of the children who suffered abuse have resisted, leading to the child involved suffering further injuries in 53.3% of the cases. 20% of the assaults led to pregnancies. Abuse cases recur at a rate of 62%. Such suffering endured by abused children is only revealed after the child talks to their mothers about the incident, or after the parents have noticed the suffering of the child. In 81.3% of the cases no judicial reports were issued. On the other hand, judicial or hospital reports issued note that 78.6% of the children suffer very negative psychological consequences as a result of the incident.⁴⁸

It is impossible to clearly categorize the perpetrators of the cases which are generally called child abuse. Adherence to a specific religion or culture, or subjection to certain economic conditions, do not provide clues about the inclination to abuse. Yet, on an individual basis, the persons who commit child abuse are observed to

have cognitive, emotional and behavioral issues. Moreover, research revealed that most of these perpetrators have engaged in substance abuse and had experienced similar traumas during their own childhood. This issue has been a matter of debate throughout history, and leads to unstable mood swings, damage to cognitive capabilities, and academic failure among the children who have suffered abuse. Aggressive behavior leading to crime, anxiety disorders, an inclination to suicide, nightmares, phobias, attention deficit and hyperactivity are again most common among the children who have suffered abuse.

No specific correlations can be found between demographic and socio-economic indicators and child abuse, yet the possibility of connection has been raised more and more frequently in the past few years. Wars, natural disasters, social and moral problems leading to personal ruin, inadequacies of government social policies, along with many more comparable problems of the 21st century, have all led to an increase in child abuse. Many children suffer displacement and being forced out of their homelands due to wars or other reasons. They are then left defenseless as they lose their families. The situation is often worse for the oldest

THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF ABUSE LAST A LIFETIME

Adults who were abused or neglected as children have a higher risk of:



Perpetrating or being a victim of violence



Depression



Obesity



High-risk sexual behaviours and unintended pregnancies



Harmful use of tobacco, drugs, and alcohol

daughter of the family who may well be required to take over the role of the spouse and woman of the house, which in turn leads to increased cases of abuse. The statistics and cases brought to light indicate that child abuse is seemingly evolving in a worrisome direction and is a social problem deeply affecting every aspect of society.

It can therefore be said that the issue of child abuse poses a serious problem for any nation around the globe. If there is a lack of proper measures, this issue can form a cycle that spans generations, thus also posing a threat for the future. A child who suffers violence and sexual abuse may well be inclined to inflict, in the future, those experiences on other children. This makes the problem one with consequences for future generations. In order to prevent child abuse, comprehensive legal, political, moral, and religious measures, as well as steps within the family, should be taken.

Poverty and its Impact on Children

Varying in terms of causes and scale from one country to another, poverty is at the top of the

list of problems humanity has tried hard to solve. According to the UN's definition, poverty refers to an individual being deprived of fundamental rights such as nourishment, clothing, accommodation and education.

A lack of economic, geographical, and political capacity to meet the daily basic needs of the individual also comprises yet another aspect of poverty. Natural disasters, desertification, incomplete and damaging policies caused by corruption, unemployment, rapid population growth, and brain drain are often major factors, while the need to adapt to geographic conditions may also bring about poverty.

Poverty occurs in different forms in developed and developing countries. Hunger, epidemics, child labor and deaths caused by these are but just a few of the indications of poverty.

Poor Children Around the World

Children are hit hardest by poverty, and this is a problem which should be investigated and debated with reference to all segments of so-

ciety. All over the globe, poor children face numerous health problems caused by a lack of nourishment. Furthermore, by being forced to live under such dire circumstances, most of these children either have to endure extremely trying conditions to continue their education, or just drop out completely.

Unfortunately, the impact of child poverty, which is an alarming development for any country whether in the East or the West, is usually permanent. Children constitute almost half of the poor people around the world. Today, 569 million children around the globe have to live on 1 Euro per day. Rights directly related with the positive development of the child, such as eating well, having a good life, living in a pleasant world, obtaining quality clothing and suitable accommodation, not to mention education, may not always be available due to poverty. 247 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa live in extreme poverty. Even the most developed economies of the world suffer from worrisome levels of child poverty. In Europe, 26 million children face the risk of poverty and social exclusion.⁴⁹

Child poverty is not about money alone; it is a multi-dimensional issue. For children, poverty means being deprived of important needs such as nourishment, healthcare, water, education and shelter. According to UNICEF, two in every three children in 30 Sub-Saharan Africa countries suffer from the lack of two or more of these elements. Each year, 5.9 million children die due to malnutrition.⁵⁰ This translates to an average of 2,000 children dying each day.⁵¹ A 2013 UN report on “Child Deaths” worldwide notes that in 2012, 6.6 million children died due to hunger and epidemics, many of whom were under the age of five. The data in the report suggests that India, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and the People’s Republic of China have the leading instances of child death.

A review of the rates of child poverty across individual countries reveals that, even in the UK, the

sixth richest country in the world, every fourth child faces the risk of poverty. This risk costs the UK government approximately 29 billion pounds a year.⁵² According to a number of studies, child poverty in the UK is most prevalent in London, Manchester and Birmingham.⁵³ In the UK, 1.7 million children live below the poverty line. This does not include the hundreds of thousands of children going to school on an empty stomach, with just 700,000 being eligible for free school lunches.⁵⁴ According to the latest figures, a substantial percentage of children in the UK are classified as being poor. Experts state that the child poverty rates in the UK will continue to rise until 2021, representing the onset of a growing wave of poverty which will affect the whole country in subsequent years. The low levels of wages in a country, such as the UK, which has 74% of its population working, is yet another reason for the growing number of poor people.⁵⁵ The case in France is not much better than that of the UK. In France, every fifth child faces the risk of poverty. This means that, according to data gathered in research conducted in 2015, more than 3 million children living in France were categorized as being poor. 30,000 of these are homeless, with 9,000 living in shanty-towns. According to the survey, 140,000 of the children from disadvantaged socio-economic groups had dropped out of the school due to economic problems.⁵⁶ In Spain, another EU member state, children are once again found to be the segment of the society most vulnerable to poverty. According to a number of studies, the rate of poverty among the children of Spain rose by nine percent to 40% in the period 2008-2014.⁵⁷ In Andalusia, an autonomous community to the south of Spain, the case is even worse. In this district, 44% of children are forced to live in poverty.⁵⁸

Child Laborers

In addition to deaths due to hunger and epidemics, poverty manifests itself through children in another destructive form: the view of the child as a means for income. A child may be seen as

a form of life insurance by their families. This will lead to a child being forced to work on the grounds of contributing to the family budget, bringing in income to sustain the household, or simply fighting off poverty. The practice of making children who have not yet reached the age of consent work lies at the root of the “child labor” problem and constitutes a violation of children’s rights, not to mention being at the root of many moral problems. The conscription of children, and their use in pornographic videos and as sexual commodities, are also elements of the child labor issue. In a nutshell, any kind of work which prevents the child from enjoying his or her childhood, damaging his or her potential and respectability, and perhaps on a more crucial note, his or her physical and mental development, are deemed problems due to child labor.

According to international legal norms, forcing children into slavery or similar practices, such as making them work as payment for debts or as indentured servants, are strictly prohibited. Yet, such prohibitions cannot prevent the exploitation of millions of children who are forced to put their education on hold and disregard their safety in order to perform various kinds of work. Representing the most vulnerable form of labor, child laborers face problems such as exclusion, failure to adapt to society, and alienation from other people. Deprived of their right to education due to having to work, these children are usually given the most dangerous and least rewarding jobs.

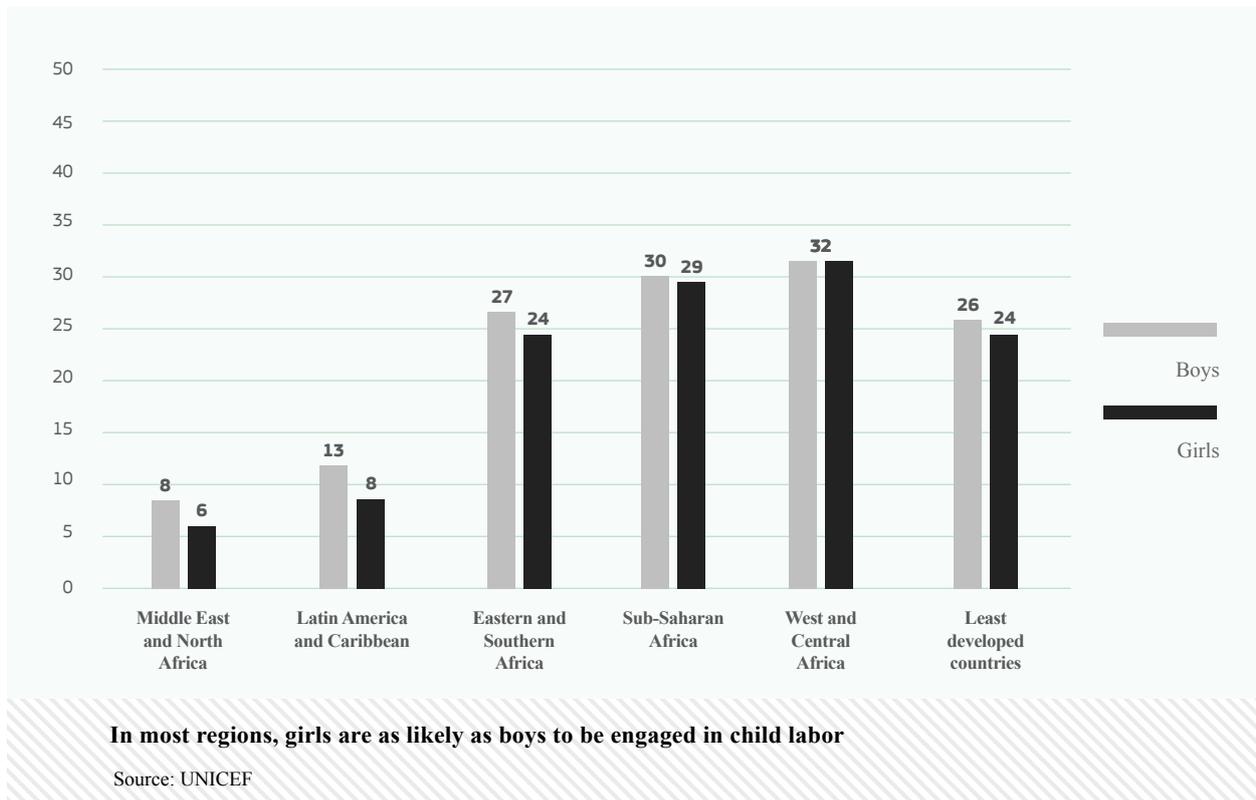
Today there are more than 200 million child laborers worldwide. 73 million of these are under the age of 10. Child labor is most prevalent in Sub-Saharan Africa. The majority of child laborers there are employed in cocoa, coffee, cotton and rubber plantations. 20 million children reportedly work in textiles, carpet, toy, matches and cigar factories.⁵⁹ According to International Labour Organization’s (ILO) World Report on

Child Labor 2015, approximately 30% of the children in low-income countries start to work by the age of 15. The report also notes, among other statistics, that there are 120 million child laborers worldwide aged between 5-14. Child labor is prevalent in almost all manufacturing sectors of both the developed countries and the developing countries of Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. However, the picture even bleaker in under-developed countries. According to data provided by UNICEF in 2017, child laborers aged between 5-17 account for 7% of the labor force in the Middle East, and this rises to 11% in Latin America and the Caribbean, 29% in East and South Africa, 32% in West and Central Africa, and 26% in developed countries.⁶⁰

The war in Syria has accelerated the growth of child labor worldwide. Syrian families forced to leave their homelands often now turn a blind eye to the work of their children, due to their concerns of survival and access to basic food in the countries they have taken refuge in. According to figures from 2013, there are 30,000 Syrian child laborers in Jordan, with 50,000 more in Lebanon.⁶¹

Child labor is also a concern for Turkey, which is in the process of transformation from a rural economy to an industrial one. The problems individuals have in terms of adaptation to the society as a result of the population movements from rural areas to the cities, and the practice of families having their children supplement the family income, increases the number of child laborers working on the streets and in marginal industries.

According to studies carried out in 2012, there are 15,247,000 children aged between 6-17 in Turkey. 66.5% of these live in the cities, while 33.5% live in rural areas. Out of these, 91.5% continue to attend school, while 8.5% left the school.⁶² According to TUIK’s Working Children Survey 2012, child laborers in Turkey



give the following reasons for working: 41.4% of children aged between 6-17 have joined the ranks of working population “to contribute to household income”, while 28.7% did so “to assist the economic activity of the household”, and 15.2% “to learn about an occupation and get vocational training.” The children working at the request of the family constitute 6% of the group, while 6.8% work to meet their own needs.⁶³ The children in urban areas are employed mostly in industry and service sectors, such as in house chores, babysitting, stores, small workshops and restaurants, while those in rural areas engage in house chores as well as in agricultural and animal husbandry activities. The children who do not attend school work above the country average in terms of the working week, registering on average 54.3 hours of work each week.⁶⁴ 52% of the children who work on payroll, per diem, or on their own account were found to earn an average of TRY 400 a month in 2012.⁶⁵ 3.4% of the children working on payroll or on per diem had experienced a disability or injury, while 34% feels excessively tired. One

third are not provided lunch at work, and 36% are not given leave on weekends. For 89% of working children, annual paid leave is but a distant dream. 21.7% of the children work to gain vocational training.

49.8% of working children continue to attend school, while 50.2% do not. 81.8% of working children aged between 6-14 continue to attend school, while the rate among those aged between 15-17 is 34.3%. 44.7% of these children work in agriculture; 24.3% work in industry, and 31% work in the service sector. 52.6% of the children work on payroll or per diem, while 46.2% work for free in the family businesses.⁶⁶

Poverty’s Impact on Children

The traumas endured by child laborers as they are forced to work in disregard of their personal abilities and skills, not to mention their psychological development, leads to their isolation from society. Children living in cities as well as rural areas suffer physically and psychologically due to such work, and may fall ill or be exposed

to exploitation. Substance abuse is also found to be higher among children who have to work. Feeling that the world is inherently unsafe and definitely not a utopia, these children are more inclined to crime as compared to their peers. Extensive research has shown that people who suffered poverty during their childhood become mired in lasting poverty throughout their lives, with a vicious cycle being created that triggers major social risks.

Conclusion

As the “state of children” is one of the most important indicators of the development of a society, this report unfortunately paints a universally bleak global picture. In the 21st century, a time that we like to call modern, children, who are the corner stone of healthy progress and development of social life, are still facing sexual abuse, ill treatment and other shameful circumstances. Although it is well known that children must be carefully protected and cared for, they are forced to witness the ever changing military tactics and methods in our changing and evolving world. This leads to damage of their physical, psychological, mental and moral development. Such forced and shameful treatment leads to serious damage of their physical and psychological development, with subsequent negative effects being created which shape the future of the society they live in.

Humanity is under an obligation to find a solution to the damage it is causing to itself, and upon its children in particular. It is modern societies and their regulatory powers which are fundamentally responsible for providing suitable conditions for the physical, psychological, mental and moral development of children. The individuals and entities who have an awareness of this responsibility are now seeking various solutions to the violations of children’s rights. One consequence of this quest for solutions was the “Millennium Declaration” adopted

by the UN. This saw 191 countries committed to seeking solutions to the social, economic, legal and environmental problems faced by all countries. These objectives, called “Millennium Development Goals”, have been formulated for the development of a shared perspective at the global, regional and national levels.

The Millennium Development Goals are planned to be achieved within the 25-years time scale from 1990 to 2015. They include a number of points such as halving the number of people living in abject poverty and starvation, making primary education available to all, emphasizing gender equality in social life, reducing under 5 infant mortality and maternal deaths during pregnancy, preventing worldwide epidemics, ensuring environmental sustainability, increasing aid and reducing debt burdens.

Yet, despite these goals being set to put an end to various forms of damage suffered by humanity, today 1.2 billion people still live in poverty. As a result of the outbreak of war in various regions of the world, many people have had to emigrate from their homelands. Many women and children have died due to wars, while those who survived have had to endure the most extreme forms of abuse. The quantitative data regarding the achievement of these lofty 25 year goals are as follows:

- Poverty has fallen by half from 1990 to 2010; however, 1.2 billion people still live in abject poverty.
- Even though substantial progress was achieved in the early 2000s, the efforts to reduce the number of children dropping out of school have slowed down significantly.
- Women now hold a larger share of power in parliaments, thanks to the introduction of quota systems.
- Despite important developments, still more efforts are needed to achieve the “Millennium



Development Goals” regarding the reduction in child death rates.

- Much more progress is required to reduce maternal death rates.
- Poverty and a lack of education still leads to a higher rate of teenage births.
- The number of AIDS sufferers is still very high.
- Each year millions of hectares of forests are being lost, while global greenhouse gas emissions continue to grow each day.
- The official aid agencies seeking to prevent child abuse have maximized their efforts and have reversed the worsening trend witnessed in the last two years.

On the other hand, there are 153 million orphans worldwide. Given the fact that the orphans in countries such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine, Sudan, Bangladesh, India and China are not represented in the statistics, a figure approaching 400 million could be more realistic. According to various studies, these children, who are facing a number of threats, are deprived of many fundamental rights such as the right to education.

In light of all the problems discussed in this report, it is evident that it is impossible to achieve a solution to the problem of children’s rights abuses without achieving economic development of societies around the world, increasing income per capita, making social state perspective dominant in the international arena, increasing the level of education among women and children in particular, and raising awareness about child abuse.

It is clear that abuses against children, who are by definition innocent, defenseless and powerless, cannot be prevented through legal and law-enforcement measures alone. In this perspective, strengthening social education and moral principles, and the protection of family values, as well as preventing wars, hunger and poverty are a few of the wide range of measures required.

For instance, the threats orphans face cannot be eliminated completely without penal sanctions to deter crime networks such as human traffickers, organ mafia and prostitution networks, which pose particular dangers for orphans. In particular, children being orphaned due to political crises will continue to be an issue unless states and international organizations, such as the UN, take the necessary steps. In terms of reintegrating orphans with the society, without the support of their relatives these children will either have a difficult time in adapting to the social life or will completely fail in their efforts. The rehabilitation efforts to improve the physical and psychological state of the children abused by crime networks, or used as cheap labor, need to be accelerated if the physical and psychological destruction these children suffer is to be overcome at all.

Unless a comprehensive solution can be found to the global phenomena of the young and old, men and women, children and adults being packed in small boats and sent to Europe, often drowning and dying on their way towards a new home while trying to escape the aftermath of the wars ravaging their original homelands, child abuse in Europe will not come to an end. Any measures taken cannot be equivalent to the Calais Refugee Camp set up by France for the refugees, but under physical conditions which were incompatible with human dignity, and which saw children experiencing sexual abuse, leading to the closing of the camp in 2016. Furthermore, the problems faced by the Palestinian children who suffer abuse and violence in the hands of occupying soldiers in West Bank and Gaza under Israeli occupation will not end without the end of the occupation itself.

In this sense, “The Global Children’s Report Card on Children” is clearly full of failing grades. Furthermore, progress towards the millennium development goals in terms of matters concerning children is also doubtful.

Considering these problems as domestic issues concerning only the state in question does not make solutions easier. In other words, the abuses and violence suffered by children, and the conscription of children to military service, should be handled only by taking a universal perspective.

Economic sanctions imposed by states preventing the flow of humanitarian aid to blockaded areas during wars should be considered war crimes, and lead to international repercussions for the parties which impose such sanctions. At the refugee camps housing children who suffer due to war, any and all measures required to raise children as healthy individuals should be taken; special attention should also be paid to prevent any abuse on children left alone. Rehabilitation efforts to accelerate the psychological recovery of the children affected by wars should be given more time and resources. The solution to the problem of child labor, in turn, lies through the achievement of economic welfare in the countries suffering from that problem, and thus should be handled with measures for macro-economic development. The social welfare policies of the governments should be improved to prevent the use and abuse of children to earn extra income for their families, and poor households should be provided with income assistance.

In a nutshell, legal measures such as raising the awareness of the society and providing strong ties to bring all people together are crucial in terms of the physical, psychological, economic and spiritual protection of children.



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