SRMUN ATLANTA 2021
Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership
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Greetings Delegates,

Welcome to SRMUN Atlanta 2021 and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Executive Board. Serving as the committee's Assistant Director will be Kaadir Mohiuddin. Kaadir has three years of experience with SRMUN as a delegate, prior to graduating from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2018. This will be Kaadir's first year serving as an Assistant Director at SRMUN Atlanta. Previously, Kaadir has served as a rapporteur at SRMUN Charlotte 2017. Outside of SRMUN, Kaadir served as Secretary-General for Carolinas Conference 2017 in Charlotte and as Director for Security Council at Carolinas Conference in Charlotte 2018-2019. The UNICEF Director will be announced on a later date.

Founded in 1946, UNICEF, previously known as the United Nations International Children's Education Fund, became the UN's first major committee focused specifically on furthering the human rights and welfare of children. The UNICEF Executive Board consists of 36 Member States serving in rotating three-year terms of service, ensuring a balance of regional representation. Emergency missions of UNICEF are primarily carried out by one of seven regional offices for ease of access in times of crisis. UNICEF's mission of poverty reduction for children includes access to education, safe food and water, a safe home, and a peaceful and prosperous nation.

By focusing on the mission of UNICEF and the SRMUN Atlanta 2021 theme of "*Fostering Global Youth Empowerment and Leadership,*" we have developed the following topics for the delegates to discuss come conference:

  I. Addressing the Needs of Homeless Youth Populations
  II. Combating the Exploitation of Children by Violent Extremist Groups

The background guide provides a strong introduction to the committee and topics that will be debated at SRMUN Atlanta 2021. It should be utilized as a foundation for a delegate's independent research. However, while we have attempted to provide a holistic analysis of the issues, the background guide should not be used as the single mode of analysis for the topics. Delegates are expected to go beyond the background guide and engage in intellectual inquiry of their own. The position papers for the committee should reflect the complexity of these issues and their externalities. Delegations are expected to submit a position paper and be prepared for a vigorous discussion at the conference. Position papers should be no longer than two pages in length (single spaced) and demonstrate your Member State's position, policies, and recommendations on each of the two topics. For more detailed information about formatting and how to write position papers, delegates can visit srmun.org. *__All position papers MUST be submitted no later than Friday, October 29, 2021, by 11:59pm EST via the SRMUN website in order to be eligible for Outstanding Position Paper Awards.__*

We are enthusiastic about the UNICEF Executive Board at SRMUN Atlanta 2021. We wish you all the best of luck in your conference preparation and look forward to working with you soon. Please feel free to contact the conference's Director-General Rachael Wnuk or Kaadir if you have any questions while preparing for the conference.

To Be Announced	Kaadir Mohiuddin	Rachael Wnuk
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History of the United Nations Children's Fund

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is an agency created by the United Nations (UN) under the General Assembly (GA), specifically as part of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which is responsible for addressing the issues affecting children around the world.[1] UNICEF is the successor to the UN body known as International Children's Emergency Fund (ICEF) that was created after the end of the Second World War on December 11, 1946, primarily to respond to the needs of children in humanitarian crises.[2] In 1953, the agency became a permanent part of the UN network. UNICEF currently addresses the various needs of children across all Member States ranging from humanitarian aid and societal development to financial assistance and educational development. The current head of UNICEF is known as the Executive Director, which is currently held by Henrietta H. Fore from the United States (US) of America.[3]

According to the Mission Statement of UNICEF, the goal of the agency is "to advocate for the protection of children's rights, to help meet their basic needs, and to expand their opportunities to reach their full potential."[4] In 1950, the UNICEF's mandate was expanded to address the long term needs of women and children; and in 1953, that mandate was made permanent when the UN saw the need to continue the aforementioned aid, specifically for developing Member States. In 1989, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was created in order to lay out universal and indivisible rights that apply to every child.[5] The CRC is guided by four fundamental principles that apply to every child which are: Non-discrimination (Article 2); the best interests of the child (Article 3); survival, development and protection (Article 6); and participation (Article 12). The convention plays a key role in UNICEF's current mandate, which is to "safeguard the rights of all children, everywhere." The UNICEF mandate is also strengthened by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by world leaders in 2015, which apply to every UN Member State.[6] The UNICEF Strategic Plan 2018-2021 suggests that UNICEF will continue its advocacy and programming with focuses on education and skills-training for adolescents and will establish programs for emerging issues such as mental health and suicide, road safety, and cyber safety[7].

Since the permanent establishment of the current mandate in 1953, UNICEF has experienced a broad expansion of its roles and duties. In a time span of 20 years, the organization's mandate grew to include the wide range of factors necessary for the proper development of mothers and their children, including nutrition, education, and family planning and maternal health.[8] The organization was noted for its efficient response to providing aid to mothers and their children in the concurrent conflicts of Biafra in Nigeria and the Vietnam War.[9] In 1965, the committee was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize "for its effort to enhance solidarity between nations and reduce the difference between rich and poor states."[10] In addition to its own work within the UN, UNICEF works with grassroots organizations and the national governments of Member States to lobby for legislation in favor of children's rights.[11] UNICEF cooperates with 190 Member States to establish aid centers focused on a holistic approach to the development of children.[12]

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[1] UNICEF, "What does the acronym UNICEF stand for?" About UNICEF, UNICEF. (Accessed February 7, 2021). https://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_faq.html. (Accessed February 7, 2021).
[2] "UNICEF History." UNICEF. Accessed April 26, 2021. https://www.unicef.org/history.
[3] "Organization: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)." Human Rights Library, University of Minnesota. http://hrlibrary.umn.edu/UNICEF.html (Accessed February 7, 2021).
[4] "Organization: United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)." Human Rights Library, University of Minnesota.
[5] "Our mandate: no child left behind," United Nations Children's Fund, https://www.unicef.org/eca/our-mandate-no-child-left-behind (Accessed February 7, 2021).
[6] "Our mandate: no child left behind," United Nations Children's Fund.
[7] "UNICEF STRATEGIC PLAN 2018–2021 Executive Summary," United Nations Children's Fund, www.unicef.org/media/48126/file/UNICEF_Strategic_Plan_2018-2021-ENG.pdf (Accessed January 31, 2021).
[8] "Emerging from the Ashes of War: 1946–1979," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/stories/learning-experience-19461979 (Accessed January 31, 2021).
[9] "Emerging from the Ashes of War: 1946-1979," UNICEF.
[10] "The Nobel Peace Prize 1965." NobelPrize.org, https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1965/summary/ (Accessed January 31, 2021).
[11] "UNICEF: The United Nations Children's Fund - Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth." United Nations. https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/2013/09/unicef-the-united-nations-childrens-fund/ (Accessed January 31, 2021).
[12] "What We Do," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do (Accessed January 31, 2021).

The UNICEF Executive Board is the governing body of UNICEF, providing oversight and support for the organization in accordance with policy guidance from the GA and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and report policy suggestions and ideas.[13] The Executive Board oversees all UNICEF activities, as well as approves the budgets and policies that the agency and its regional programs passed.[14] The UNICEF Executive Board is comprised of 36 Member States made up from members of all five UN regional groups and elected to three-year terms by the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).[15] Each region of the world is allocated a different number of seats: Africa (8), Asia (7), Eastern Europe (4), Latin America and the Caribbean (5) and Western Europe/Others (12).[16] The Executive Board functions as the main authority on all UNICEF budgets, functions, programs, innovations, and strategies.[17] All UNICEF Executive Board decisions are voted by consensus.[18]

Additionally, UNICEF provides policy suggestions to the UNGA and ECOSOC to further the agenda of assistance for children.[19] Full committee sessions are held three times a year: February, June, and September. As of 2020, all formal sessions have been held virtually with a public access livestream; the next annual session was scheduled to begin on June 1st and concluded on June 11th.[20] Membership to UNICEF consists of an even representation of all five major regional groups as recognized by the UN, and members are elected to serve on rotating three-year terms.[21] Furthermore, global missions are typically carried out by one of the seven regional offices, each serving its region's specific needs and expediting operations in a time of crisis.[22] UNICEF's operations are funded by voluntary contributions from a variety of benefactors, from private individuals to national governments and the public sector.[23]

The UN's first declaration to include the rights of children was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, passed in 1948; Article 25 states that "Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and attention."[24] The precursor to the current Convention, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, was passed unanimously and consisted of ten core principles of children's human rights, including education, special protection for personal development, and protection from neglect.[25] For the last 30 years, UNICEF has been tasked with maintaining the CRC.[26] Today, the CRC affirms the rights of children, defined as "every human being below the age of eighteen years," to be protected in all situations that may endanger their personal and emotional safety.[27] Furthermore, Member States are obligated to apply the "equal and inalienable rights" outlined in the Convention to all children without discrimination.[28] To date, the CRC remains as the most universally ratified convention in the recent history of the United Nations.

Since COVID-19 (or SARS-CoV-2) was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) in March 2020, many Member States enforced strict quarantines on their citizens, which resulted in school and workplace

[13] "About UNICEF," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_introduction.html (Accessed June 14, 2021).

[14] "Where does UNICEF operate and where is it based?," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/what-we-do (accessed June 14, 2021).

[15] "UNICEF Executive Board," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/ (accessed June 14, 2021).

[16] "UNICEF Executive Board," UNICEF.

[17] "UNICEF Executive Board," UNICEF.

[18] "The UNICEF Executive Board: An Informal Guide," The United Nations Children's Fund, http://www.unicef.org/about/execboard/files/Executive_Board-An_Informal_Guide-2014-ENGLISH.pdf (Accessed June 14, 2021).

[19] "About the UNICEF Executive Board." UNICEF Executive Board, https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/about (Accessed February 3, 2021).

[20] "About the UNICEF Executive Board." UNICEF Executive Board.

[21] "The UNICEF Executive Board Membership," UNICEF Executive Board, https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/membership (Accessed February 3, 2021).

[22] "UNICEF Regional Offices," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/about/structure/index_regional.html (Accessed September 27, 2017).

[23] "Funding to UNICEF," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/partnerships/funding (Accessed February 3, 2021).

[24] "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ (Accessed January 29, 2021).

[25] "Declaration of the Rights of the Child, 1959," Humanium, https://www.humanium.org/en/declaration-rights-child-2/ (Accessed January 29, 2021).

[26] "What Is the Convention on the Rights of the Child?" UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/what-is-the-convention (Accessed January 29, 2021).

[27] "Convention on the Rights of the Child," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention/convention-text (Accessed January 29, 2021).

[28] "Convention on the Rights of the Child," UNICEF.

closures, limited services available to the public, and strained financial resources.[29] These impacts — often compounded by unique social challenges such as poverty, wars, and pre-existing illnesses — have significantly impacted youth populations.[30] Thus, UNICEF has worked to adopt their global response to address the unique challenges facing vulnerable children across the world in the wake of the pandemic. After initiating a response to COVID-19 in early 2020, UNICEF and its partners have reached 153 Member States and territories and assisted over 260 million children.[31] Efforts have focused on providing supplies, support, and crucial services such as health and nutrition, education, water, and sanitation and hygiene materials to those in need, according to a 2020 UNICEF Humanitarian Action appeal.[32] According to UNICEF's Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) appeal, an annual framework outlining UNICEF's present financial goals for the rights of children, the HAC appeal for 2021 totals USD 6.4 Billion and will help more than 300 million children and their family members and caregivers. Furthermore, UNICEF is also working on procuring and supplying the COVID-19 vaccine.

UNICEF Executive Director Fore stated that the agency has been "negotiating long-term supply agreements with a number of manufacturers – agreements that will pave the way for the world's poorest countries to access doses of quality-assured vaccines."[33] Additionally, UNICEF has and will continue to work towards achieving the SDGs for children through enhanced education, health, and equality for all and a commitment to children's rights. UNICEF will directly address issues of neonatal mortality, early childhood development, child marriage, female genital mutilation, child discipline, sexual violence against children, and pro-poor public social spending.[34]

[29] "WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020." World Health Organization, https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020 (Accessed March 4, 2021).

[30] "WHO Director-General's Opening Remarks at the Media Briefing on COVID-19 - 11 March 2020," World Health Organization.

[31] "Global COVID-19 Response," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/appeals/covid-19 (Accessed March 4, 2021).

[32] "Global COVID-19 Response." UNICEF.

[33] "Remarks by Henrietta Fore, UNICEF Executive Director, at Press Briefing on COVAX," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/remarks-henrietta-fore-unicef-executive-director-press-briefing-covax (Accessed March 4, 2021).

[34] "Children and the Sustainable Development Goals," UNICEF, http://data.unicef.org/children-sustainable-development-goals (Accessed March 4, 2021).

I. Addressing the Needs of Homeless Youth Populations

Introduction

Homelessness is a prevalent issue that affects every Member State across the globe.[35] In Paragraph 30, under Guideline 5, of A/HRC/43/43, *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing*, the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing stated, "Homelessness is a profound assault on dignity, social inclusion and the right to life… [It] violates a number of other human rights in addition to the right to life, including non-discrimination, health, water and sanitation, security of the person and freedom from cruel, degrading, and inhuman treatment."[36] Homelessness lies at the intersection of health, security, and intergenerational issues, as homelessness has a profound effect against the sick, elderly, youth, and individuals facing domestic and state violence.[37]

The youth are an especially vulnerable population to homelessness. For the purpose of statistical collection, the United Nations (UN) generally recognizes "youth" as individuals between the ages of 15 and 24, or teenagers and young adults.[38] The UN estimates there are approximately 1.2 billion individuals in this age group, comprising 16 percent of the global population.[39] As the number of youths continues to grow, existing financial and housing resources are being put under strain to accommodate the burgeoning population.[40]

At present, youth make up approximately 25 percent of the global workforce, yet the global unemployment rate is 3 times greater than the rate for adults.[41] As of 2014, the unemployment rate was highest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, particularly areas where chronic poverty and civil unrest are prevalent.[42] Youth unemployment is connected to poverty among the "working poor", or individuals living in poverty despite having consistent employment.[43] 152 million youth, or 24 percent of all working poor, live under the global poverty threshold of USD 1.25 per day.[44] The connection of homelessness and poverty is a powerful force; a 2016 JAMA Pediatrics report of 13,559 participants in 24 Member States showed that 39 percent of the participants cited extreme poverty as their primary driving force for homelessness.[45]

Previous Actions Taken by the United Nations

In accordance with the United Nations Children's Fund's (UNICEF) mandate, the most important document in the task of addressing youth homelessness has been and continues to be the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). Article 27 of the UNCRC outlines State and parental responsibility for protecting the rights and dignity of homeless children.[46] State Parties, according to the Convention, are implored to "recognize the right of every child to a standard of living adequate for the child's physical, mental, spiritual, moral and social

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[35] "Homelessness and Human Rights," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/housing/pages/homelessnessandhumanrights.aspx (Accessed March 23, 2021).

[36] United Nations Human Rights Council, Resolution 43, *Guidelines for the Implementation of the Right to Adequate Housing,* A/HRC/43/43, December 26, 2019, http://undocs.org/A/HRC/43/43.

[37] "Analyzing the Impact of Social Factors on Homelessness: a Fuzzy Cognitive Map Approach." BMC Medical, https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6947-13-94 (Accessed March 23, 2021).

[38] "Youth," United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/youth (Accessed July 5, 2021).

[39] "Youth," United Nations.

[40] "Youth," United Nations.

[41] "#YouthStats: Employment – Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth," United Nations, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/employment/ (Accessed July 5, 2021).

[42] "#YouthStats: Employment – Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth," United Nations.

[43] "#YouthStats: Hunger and Poverty – Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth," United Nations, https://www.un.org/youthenvoy/hunger-poverty/ (Accessed July 5, 2021).

[44] "#YouthStats: Hunger and Poverty – Office of the Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth," United Nations.

[45] Seaman, Andrew M. "Poverty to Blame for Most Youth Homelessness Worldwide," Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-homeless-youths/poverty-to-blame-for-most-youth-homelessness-worldwide-idUSKCN0X12BQ (Accessed July 5, 2021).

[46] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Convention on the Rights of the Child,* November 20, 1989. https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx.

development."[47] Similarly, parents and legal guardians "have the primary responsibility to secure, within their abilities and financial capacities, the conditions of living necessary for the child's development."[48]

The Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a subsidiary committee of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), works with UNICEF to ensure the implementation of the UNCRC and other major human rights protocols related to children.[49] Three Optional Protocols have been added to the Convention: the involvement of children in armed conflict (2002), the sale of children into prostitution and child pornography (2002), and a communications procedure to allow children to directly report on specific abuses (2014).[50] In 2017, the Committee published recommendations for the protection of the rights of street children in its General Comment (GC) No. 21.[51] The GC called for respecting the existence of street children and ending policies determined to be "discriminatory" against homeless populations.[52]

On February 19, 2020, the UN passed the first major comprehensive resolution addressing homelessness at the 58th session of the UN Commission for Social Development.[53] The resolution, formally enacted as E/RES/2020/7, explicitly identifies the intersectional socioeconomic circumstances which force individuals into homelessness.[54] The passage of the resolution coincided with the anniversary of A/CONF.166/9, colloquially known as the Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development, which prioritized the eradication of poverty and the factors that drive homelessness and identifies its erasure as "an ethical, social, political, and economic imperative."[55] Building upon the initiatives of the Declaration, the UN set out to include the homeless population in a plan to ensure gainful employment and proper integration into society.[56]

In April 2021, at the 10th annual Economic and Social Council's (ECOSOC) Youth Forum, there was a side event held specifically to discuss the topic of youth homelessness.[57] This event sought to raise awareness of what the characteristics of youth homelessness are, identify successful initiatives and advocate for an internationally agreed definition of homelessness.[58] The event included panelists from UN Bodies, experts from various Member States and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).[59]

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[47] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

[48] United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Convention on the Rights of the Child*.

[49] "Committee on the Rights of the Child," OHCHR, https://www.ohchr.org/en/hrbodies/crc/pages/crcindex.aspx (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[50] "Committee on the Rights of the Child," OHCHR.

[51] "Homelessness and Human Rights," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/housing/pages/homelessnessandhumanrights.aspx (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[52] United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, *General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street conditions*, CRC/C/GC/21, June 21, 2017, https://www.undocs.org/CRC/C/GC/21.

[53] "First-Ever United Nations Resolution on Homelessness," United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/2020/03/resolution-homelessness/ (Accessed July 10 2021).

[54] "First-Ever United Nations Resolution on Homelessness," United Nations.

[55] "Celebrating 25 Years of Championing Social Inclusion," United Nations, https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/everyone-included.html (Accessed July 10, 2021).

[56] "First-Ever United Nations Resolution on Homelessness," United Nations.

[57] "10th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum: Side Event at the ECOSOC Forum on Ending Youth Homelessness: policies, measures, and success" ECOSOC, April 6, 2021, https://www.un.org/ecosoc/sites/www.un.org.ecosoc/files/files/en/2021doc/notes/un-habitat-ending-youth-homelessness.pdf

[58] "10th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum: Side Event at the ECOSOC Forum on Ending Youth Homelessness: policies, measures, and success" ECOSOC.

[59] "10th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum: Side Event at the ECOSOC Forum on Ending Youth Homelessness: policies, measures, and success" ECOSOC.

Current Situation

The UN recognizes national definitions of homelessness vary from Member State to Member State.[60] This is because homelessness in developed Member States can look different than homelessness in developing Member States due to vary standards of living and access to basic necessities like food and clean water.[61] Because of this, many NGO(s) and UN bodies including UN-Habitat and ECOSOC have been calling for an internationally agreed upon definition of homelessness that is both inclusive and comprehensive. [62]

Homelessness can also be divided into two categories: overt (visible) homelessness, and latent (hidden) homelessness.[63] A common misconception about homeless populations is that it mainly occurs in the more recognized context: on city streets and in transitional shelters.[64] However, individuals with unstable housing – including, couch-surfing, car sleeping, and housing without amenities – also count as part of the homeless population.[65] Acknowledging this distinction increases visibility and understanding of the diverse nature of homeless populations.

A major hurdle in the task of addressing homelessness is that statistics for homeless populations are difficult to assess because of their inherent "invisibility" to the rest of society.[66] Because of harsh penalties which seek to punish "vagrancy" and addiction, homeless populations face fears of abuse and neglect from local authorities and government officials if they were to voluntarily reveal their conditions.[67] Due to social stigma of homelessness and difficulty in reaching homeless individuals, they are often not counted as part of many national censuses and often excluded from national aid in times of crisis.[68] As a result of these discrepancies, there is no internationally recognized standard of measuring homelessness to compare national methodologies.[69] Another hurdle is that homeless populations tend to be more transient in nature meaning it can be difficult to monitor homeless populations over time.[70]

Additionally, rapid urbanization, when done without a clear plan of development, contributes to an increase in homeless populations and the proliferation of shanty housing.[71] When populations gather quickly, resources such as proper housing and adequate food become scarce.[72] This population includes a group known as "street children," or a child living in extreme poverty who has been forced to learn to live and survive in inadequate housing on the streets, primarily in an urban setting.[73] Street children are unique in that not all of them are homeless; however,

[60] "As Cities Grow, So Do the Numbers of Homeless," YaleGlobal Online,
https://truthout.org/articles/as-cities-grow-worldwide-so-do-the-numbers-of-homeless/ (Accessed April 6, 2021).
[61] "As Cities Grow, So Do the Numbers of Homeless," YaleGlobal Online.
[62] "10th Economic and Social Council Youth Forum: Side Event at the ECOSOC Forum on Ending Youth Homelessness: policies, measures, and success" ECOSOC.
[63] "Understanding Hidden Homelessness." The Homeless Hub, https://www.homelesshub.ca/blog/understanding-hidden-homelessness (Accessed April 6, 2021).
[64] "Understanding Hidden Homelessness," The Homeless Hub.
[65] "Understanding Hidden Homelessness," The Homeless Hub.
[66] "The Hidden Vulnerability of Homelessness in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives from India," International Journal of Social Psychiatry, https://doi.org/10.1177/0020764020922890 (Accessed May 18, 2021).
[67] "As Cities Grow, So Do the Numbers of Homeless," YaleGlobal Online,
https://truthout.org/articles/as-cities-grow-worldwide-so-do-the-numbers-of-homeless/ (Accessed April 6, 2021).
[68] "The Hidden Vulnerability of Homelessness in the COVID-19 Pandemic: Perspectives from India," International Journal of Social Psychiatry.
[69] "As Cities Grow, So Do the Numbers of Homeless," YaleGlobal Online.
[70] "The Impact of Personal and Family Circumstances on Homelessness" UNANIMA International,
https://www.un.org/development/desa/dspd/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2019/05/QUINN_Jean_Paper.pdf (accessed September 6, 2021)
[71] Urbanization, Environment and Homelessness in the Developing World: The Sustainable Housing Development." Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, https://doi.org/Doi:10.5901/mjss.2014.v5n2p261 (Accessed July 9, 2021).
[72] Urbanization, Environment and Homelessness in the Developing World: The Sustainable Housing Development." Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences.
[73] "Street Children and Homelessness." The International Child and Youth Care Network (CYC-Net)
https://cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0904-homelessness.html (Accessed March 23, 2021).

street children are defined by the notion that they rely on the streets as a core aspect of their identity, either through panhandling, illegal activities or gang affiliation, or other means of survival.[74] One major cause of youth homelessness is domestic abuse, whereas their affiliation with the street environment is a symptom of their attempt to escape their present living situation.[75]

Among the general homeless population, children are especially vulnerable to other social and health dangers, such as sexual abuse, chronic illness, and extreme violence.[76] According to Human Rights Watch (HRW), street children are at the same risk of extreme violence from governmental authorities, including the police, as adult members of the homeless population.[77] Girls in particular are at a higher risk of sexual coercion and gender-based violence by police.[78] Anti-delinquency legislation has led to an increase in criminalization of street children, often under arbitrary circumstances; HRW has been active in Rwanda, where homeless children have been detained in transit centers for "exhibiting 'deviant acts or behaviors … such as prostitution, drug use, begging, vagrancy, [or] informal street vending.'"[79] During the COVID-19 pandemic, HRW has been monitoring detention policies against homeless children in Brazil, where individuals found in violation of the lockdown mandates face time in prison and other government detention facilities.[80] The resulting effect was a frequent overcrowding of juvenile detention centers and homeless children being put at higher risk of infection as a result of being forced into closed quarters.[81]

The most recent challenge in ensuring the well-being of homeless and impoverished youth populations has been the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, commonly known as COVID-19.[82] Varying degrees of homelessness contribute to many children's inability to keep up with their schoolwork, including total homelessness and inadequate homes which lack the internet connection needed to complete online lessons.[83] A report published by UNICEF in September 2020 stated that approximately one billion children worldwide face the risk of falling behind in school due to the halting of in-person instruction.[84] Furthermore, the World Bank reported that 72 million children are at risk of falling into a phenomenon known as "education poverty," or the lack of basic reading skills by the age of 10, due to school closures caused by COVID-19.[85]

The lockdowns ordered by almost every Member State because of the COVID-19 pandemic put homeless populations in a unique and devastating position. Fragile economic situations in developing Member States put a strain on pre-existing resources, such as limited hospital space, crowded housing, and ability to financially support unemployed and homeless populations.[86] In Member States where stay-at-home orders were implemented, homeless individuals faced further legal penalties and increased risks of uncontrolled infection for being unable to find housing.[87] Furthermore, deaths attributed to COVID-19 among homeless populations and in developing states have

[74] "The Facts about Street Children," Consortium for Street Children, https://www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children/ (Accessed March 23, 2021).
[75] "Causes of Child and Youth Homelessness in Developed and Developing Countries," JAMA Pediatrics, https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2016.0156 (Accessed March 23, 2021).
[76] "Human Rights Watch: Street Children," Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/legacy/children/street.htm (Accessed May 27, 2021).
[77] "Human Rights Watch: Street Children," Human Rights Watch.
[78] "Human Rights Watch: Street Children," Human Rights Watch.
[79] "Rwanda: UN Body Targets Abuse of Street Children." Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/14/rwanda-un-body-targets-abuse-street-children (Accessed May 27, 2021).
[80] "World Report 2021: Rights Trends in Brazil." Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2021/country-chapters/brazil (Accessed May 27, 2021).
[81] "World Report 2021: Rights Trends in Brazil," Human Rights Watch.
[82] "COVID-19 and Children," UNICEF DATA, https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children/ (Accessed July 7, 2021).
[83] "Education and COVID-19," UNICEF DATA, https://data.unicef.org/topic/education/covid-19/ (Accessed March 10, 2021).
[84] "Education and COVID-19," UNICEF DATA.
[85] "Pandemic Threatens to Push 72 Million More Children into Learning Poverty-World Bank Outlines a New Vision to Ensure That Every Child Learns, Everywhere," World Bank, https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2020/12/02/pandemic-threatens-to-push-72-million-more-children-into-learning-poverty-world-bank-outlines-new-vision-to-ensure-that-every-child-learns-everywhere (Accessed March 10, 2021).
[86]. "Lockdowns in Developing Countries Should Focus on Shielding The Elderly," VOX EU,https://voxeu.org/article/lockdowns-developing-countries-should-focus-shielding-elderly (Accessed May 18, 2021).
[87] "The Urban Penalty of COVID-19 Lockdowns across the Globe: Manifestations and Lessons for Anglophone Sub-Saharan Africa," GeoJournal, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10281-6 (Accessed May 18, 2021).

been severely underreported due to the lack of statistical reach of marginalized groups.[88] For children, a major source of their struggle was lack of in-person access by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) which previously offered assistance for food, education, and other basic needs.[89]

Case Study

India

In India,, approximately 27-36 million families live in inadequate housing in shantytowns and slums in major urban areas such as Mumbai and Delhi.[90] The current estimate of the total homeless population, 1.77 million, is believed to be far higher but is difficult to track due to the homeless population's inherent invisibility to government officials.[91] Homelessness among children is most commonly presented as the street children phenomenon, which is prevalent in urban areas; approximately 18 million children are classified as belonging to the "environment of the streets," a colloquial term for the difficult circumstances facing individuals who are homeless.[92] India's population of street children skews heavily male and partially consists of children who are orphans or voluntarily runaways due to abuse, neglect, poverty, and other factors in their homes.[93]

Within the first half of 2021, a severe wave of COVID-19 infections affected India, becoming the new epicenter of infections.[94] India's second wave has heavily affected the younger population, including children, due to its proportionally younger population when compared to other democracies.[95] Due to the lack of access to healthcare resources, such as ventilators and medical personnel, parents of children who become infected have been encouraged not to seek medical treatment unless there is an "increased risk" of complications.[96] Between March 1st and April 4, 2021, in India's top five most impacted states and urban areas, over 80,000 children tested positive for COVID-19, requiring higher rates of hospitalization than in the first wave in 2020.[97]

As with many other Member States, children in India were also greatly affected by the closure of in-person schooling. UNICEF India reported that hardships caused by the pandemic have increased multidimensional poverty, or poverty affected by multiple factors such as housing, food, education, and sanitation.[98] The lack of access to online schooling has been identified as the greatest risk to homeless and at-risk children in future endeavors to rise

[88] "Fact Check: COVID-19 Deaths Have Occurred in Developing Countries and among the U.S. Homeless," Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-factcheck-covid-developing-homeless/fact-check-covid-19-deaths-have-occurred-in-developing-countries-and-among-the-u-s-homeless-idUSKCN2AW0ZX (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[89] "How Coronavirus Is Affecting Underprivileged Children in India," Deusche Welle, https://www.dw.com/en/how-coronavirus-is-affecting-underprivileged-children-in-india/a-54125032 (Accessed May 27, 2021).

[90] "Informal Housing, Inadequate Property Rights." FSG, https://www.fsg.org/publications/informal-housing-inadequate-property-rights (Accessed May 28, 2021).

[91] "A View into Homelessness in India," The Borgen Project, https://borgenproject.org/homelessness-in-india/ (Accessed May 27, 2021).

[92] "Street Children as a Public Health Fiasco," Peace Review: A Journal of Social Justice, https://doi.org/10.1080/10402659.2011.548270 (Accessed May 27, 2021).

[93] "A Strange Tourist Attraction: India's Street Kids," NPR, https://www.npr.org/2011/01/23/133109831/taking-a-walk-into-the-lives-of-indias-street-kids (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[94] "As Covid-19 Devastates India, Deaths Go Undercounted," The New York Times, https://www.nytimes.com/2021/04/24/world/asia/india-coronavirus-deaths.html (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[95] "Fact Check: Myths and Misinformation about India's Covid Outbreak," CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/03/india/india-coronavirus-fact-check-intl-hnk-dst/index.html (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[96] "Fact Check: Myths and Misinformation about India's Covid Outbreak," CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/03/india/india-coronavirus-fact-check-intl-hnk-dst/index.html (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[97] "Is India's Second Covid-19 Wave Impacting More Youth and Kids than the First?" Quartz, https://qz.com/india/1997559/indias-second-covid-19-may-be-impacting-more-youth-and-kids/ (Accessed May 24, 2021).

[98] "How Coronavirus Is Affecting Underprivileged Children in India," Deusche Welle, https://www.dw.com/en/how-coronavirus-is-affecting-underprivileged-children-in-india/a-54125032 (Accessed May 27, 2021).

above poverty.[99] Children who could not access online schooling were forced to be absent from schooling, effectively losing a full year of valuable instruction time.[100]

When lockdowns were implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19, India's population of street children struggled to adjust to the new mandate.[101] Street children make a living from daily interactions with passersby and gain a semblance of independence from being forced to provide for themselves.[102] Without stable housing or a source of income, children's charities and shelters quickly became overwhelmed with an influx of street children seeking relief.[103] Combined with lockdown curfews designed to keep people at home after a certain time of night, street children were forced into hiding to escape harsh penalties for defying the regulations.[104] Some children in Delhi reported discrimination against them in food distribution lines because of their appearance.[105] As a result of their situation, the Housing and Land Rights Network (HLRN) became a forward advocate in India for the rights of homeless children.[106]

Conclusion

Homelessness is a multifaceted issue of intersecting human rights abuses that can affect anyone at any given time.[107] Given the inherent vulnerability of youth at their present stage in life, they face challenges in homelessness that require a heightened sensitivity.[108] The trauma that accompanies the state of being homeless leaves a lasting impact on the mental health of individuals who experience it on a regular basis.[109] Youth who struggle to break the cycle of poverty which leads to homelessness become adults who often suffer from a range of health problems and addiction.[110] Similarly, homeless youth need a stable foundation and source of aid to prevent possible recruitment into gangs and extremist activities.[111] Both currently homeless youth and at-risk youth in poverty face uncertain side effects of the strict mandates put into place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, further complicating difficult circumstances.[112]

Committee Directive

As Member States begin to resume normal operations, committee members are implored to discuss and understand the potential long-term effects that will impact impoverished and homeless children in the coming years. To begin, Member States are implored to discuss and debate the history of homelessness in youth and potential driving factors

[99] "How Coronavirus Is Affecting Underprivileged Children in India," Deusche Welle.
[100] "Homeless Children at Greater Risk in Coronavirus Pandemic, Says Rights Body," The New Indian Express, https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/apr/14/homeless-children-at-greater-risk-in-coronaviruspandemic-says-rights-body-2289997.html (Accessed May 24, 2021).
[101] "Coronavirus: The Children Struggling to Survive India's Lockdown," BBC News, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-52210888, (Accessed May 24, 2021).
[102] "Coronavirus: The Children Struggling to Survive India's Lockdown," BBC News.
[103] "Coronavirus: The Children Struggling to Survive India's Lockdown," BBC News.
[104] "Homeless Children at Greater Risk in Coronavirus Pandemic, Says Rights Body." The New Indian Express, April 14, 2021. Accessed May 27, 2021. https://www.newindianexpress.com/nation/2021/apr/14/homeless-children-at-greater-risk-in-coronaviruspandemic-says-rights-body-2289997.html.
[105] "How Coronavirus Is Affecting Underprivileged Children in India," Deusche Welle.
[106] "Homeless Children at Greater Risk in Coronavirus Pandemic, Says Rights Body," The New Indian Express.
[107] "Homelessness and Human Rights," United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, https://www.ohchr.org/en/issues/housing/pages/homelessnessandhumanrights.aspx (Accessed March 23, 2021).
[108] "Aging Trends in Homeless Populations." https://doi.org/10.1177/1536504213487702 (Accessed May 18, 2021).
[109] "Analyzing the Impact of Social Factors on Homelessness: a Fuzzy Cognitive Map Approach." BMC Medical, https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6947-13-94 (Accessed March 23, 2021).
[110] "Right to Education: Situation around the World," Humanium, https://www.humanium.org/en/right-to-education/ (Accessed March 10, 2021).
[111] "The Facts about Street Children," Consortium for Street Children, https://www.streetchildren.org/about-street-children/ (Accessed March 23, 2021).
[112] "COVID-19 and Children," UNICEF DATA, https://data.unicef.org/covid-19-and-children/ (Accessed July 7, 2021).

that specifically affect dependent youth. Member States are also encouraged to challenge their own preconceived notions of homelessness in order to broaden their scope of research and understanding of this complex topic. During committee deliberation, it is imperative for Member States to evaluate the many aspects of homelessness and its impact on youth to create a holistic review of potential approaches in drafted resolution

II. Combating the Exploitation of Children by Violent Extremist Groups

Introduction

The recruitment and exploitation of children by violent extremist groups is an issue plaguing Member States throughout the world.[113] Regardless of the circumstances, the exploitation by violent extremist groups often leads to violence and the victimization of the children who are recruited.[114] While the recruitment of children by armed groups has a long history, the recruitment of children by terrorist and violent extremist groups is a more recent phenomenon and has undergone notable changes over the past decade.[115] A recent example has been seen throughout the course of the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, where the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) has actively recruited and kidnapped children.[116] According to the Human Rights Without Frontiers (HRWF), the PKK has been accused of abducting more than 2,000 children by Turkish Security Forces.[117] The Human Rights Watch (HRW), the United Nations (UN) and Amnesty International have all confirmed the recruitment and use of child soldiers by the organization since the 1990s.[118]

The Geneva Centre for Security Policy defines violent extremism as, "A violent type of mobilization that aims to elevate the status of one group, while excluding or dominating its 'others' based on markers, such as gender, religion, culture, and ethnicity. In doing so, violent extremist organizations destroy existing political and cultural institutions, and supplant them with alternative governance structures that work according to the principles of a totalitarian and intolerant ideology."[119] The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has seen various forms of violence and exploitation directed at children at the hands of violent extremist groups.[120] These forms of violence include physical and emotional abuse, sexual assault, forced servitude and sometimes even death.[121] UNICEF has, with assistance from other United Nations (UN) bodies, taken previous actions to explore how the exploitation of children can not only be reduced, but what can be done to help those affected in the recovery process; and continues to explore how we can strive to make improvements in this area. [122]

Previous Actions Taken by the United Nations

According to Article 39 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

> *"States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and*

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[113] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO,
        https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244676 (Accessed May 25, 2021).
[114] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.
[115] "Dapchi Kidnappings: Nigeria Families' Heartbreak and Despair," BBC, https://www.bbc.com/news/ world-africa-43240495
        (Accessed April 05, 2021).
[116] "Child Soldiers in ISIS, PKK, Boko Haram," HRWF, https://www.hrw.org/topic/childrens-rights/child-soldiers (Accessed
        July 9, 2021).
[117] "Child Soldiers in ISIS, PKK, Boko Haram," HRWF,
[118] "Child Soldiers in ISIS, PKK, Boko Haram," HRWF,"
[119] "Defining the Concept of 'Violent Extremism," Geneva Centre for Security Policy,
        https://www.gcsp.ch/publications/defining-concept-violent-extremism (Accessed May 27, 2021).
[120] "Children Under Attack at Shocking Scale in Conflicts Around the World Says UNICEF" UNICEF, December 28, 2017,
        https://www.unicef.org/mena/press-releases/children-under-attack-shocking-scale-conflicts-around-world-says-unicef
[121] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System,"
        UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-
        Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_o
        f_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).
[122] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System,"
        UNODC.

reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child."[123]

This is the core mandate by which international law aims to protect victims of exploitation and help them reintegrate into society.[124] Throughout the history of the UN, this article has been the foundational piece of many resolutions that have focused on violence against children.[125] In 2018, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) passed A/RES/2427 which aimed to "provide a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle, as well as in sustaining peace efforts." [126] The influence of Article 39 can be seen in language throughout the resolution. Article 20 highlighted "grave concern at the use of detained children for information gathering purposes, and emphasizes that children who have been recruited in violation of applicable international law by armed forces and armed groups and are accused of having committed crimes during armed conflicts should be treated primarily as victims of violations of international law, and urges Member States to comply with applicable obligations under the CRC, and encourages access for civilian child protection actors to children deprived of liberty for association with armed forces and armed groups."[127]

On March 7, 2014, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed resolution S/RES/2143.[128] This resolution, "urged parties to armed conflict to respect the civilian character of schools and to protect schools from attacks and use, the mainstreaming of child protection in security sector reforms, child protection training for peacekeepers and military personnel and the need to incorporate child protection provisions in peace agreements."[129] This resolution targeted many important aspects of children being exploited by violent groups.[130] In an effort to reduce recruitment rates, this resolution endorsed, the campaign "Children, Not Soldiers" initiated by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict and UNICEF, in collaboration with other UN partners, with a view to end and prevent the recruitment and use of children by Government armed forces in conflict by 2016."[131] This UNSC resolution also reiterates the need for the actions that are necessary against repeated perpetrators of violence against children, which includes violent extremist groups.[132] Lastly, this Resolution provides Member-States a framework for reintegration of children that are victims of violence from extremist groups such as providing protection services for those children that need to be reintegrated.[133]

Recently, UNICEF has taken steps to not only help reduce the amount of children experiencing violence and exploitation, especially by violent groups, but also to help rehabilitative efforts for said exploited children and their families.[134] In 2019, UNICEF supported interventions that provided healthcare, social work, and law enforcement services to 2.7 million children who experienced violence via these extremist groups.[135] This was an increase of 17 percent more than the 2.3 million children reached in the previous year 2018.[136] This being a 10 percent increase over the previous year.[137] Additionally, to target violence in and around schools, which are frequently targeted by extremist organizations, UNICEF launched a powerful global coalition, the Safe to Learn program, with 14 Member

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[123] United Nations, Convention on the Rights of the Child. United Nations, 2 September 1990. Accessed May 15, 2021.
[124] "Our mandate: no child left behind," UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/eca/our-mandate-no-child-left-behind, (Accessed April 13, 2021).
[125] "Our mandate: no child left behind," UNICEF.
[126] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2427.
[127] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2427.
[128] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[129] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[130] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[131] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[132] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[133] United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2143.
[134] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).
[135] "Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection" UNICEF, https://www.unicef.org/reports/guidelines-to-strengthen-social-service-workforce-for-child-protection-2019 (Accessed May 25, 2021).
[136] "Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection" UNICEF.
[137] "Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection" UNICEF.

States endorsing this call to action.[138] The Safe to Learn program has two strategic pillars: "Greater focus on country engagement and global advocacy."[139] To this day, the Safe to Learn program continues to grow and aims to expand its operations.[140] As outlined in the program's strategy for 2021-2024, "As a response to the global and costly issue of violence in and around schools, the Safe to Learn coalition of partners has renewed its commitment for collective action through the new Safe to Learn Strategy (2021-2024). Its main goal is to accelerate progress towards at-scale change and ensure all girls and boys in all countries can learn safely wherever their learning experience happens – at home, in school, or online."[141] In July 2021, the Safe to Learn program created two new contributions in an attempt to accelerate progress to end violence in and through schools: a new "investment case" drafted by World Bank staff and a new "Safe to Learn" strategy.[142]

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) received the mandate to assist Member States in the implementation of key measures needed to prevent further abduction and/or recruitment of children through the adoption of the UNGA's Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence Against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (resolution 69/194, annex).[143] These measures are aimed at preventing and responding to violence against children. In the UNGA's most recent resolution on the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy Review (resolution 75/291), it was reiterated that every child that was accused of or recognized as having infringed the law, as well as child victims and witnesses of crimes, should be treated in a respectable manner.[144] This is especially pertinent considering the high risk the children face following reintegration such as not being accepted back into the community because of the effect they may have left behind from their previous lives as child soldiers or other sources of exploitation.[145] The Assembly also stressed that their rights must be upheld along with ensuring their dignity.[146] In addition, their basic needs as defined by international law, under the CRC must be met.

Member States are encouraged to take necessary steps to effectively reintegrate and rehabilitate children formerly associated with armed groups.[147] Acting in accordance with this review, and with the previously mentioned Resolution 2427, UNICEF and their partners work to provide a successful transition for these children back into society. UNICEF currently provides former children soldiers with "reintegration packs" filled with helpful supplies including, "civilian clothes, sandals, a blanket, bedding, a mosquito net, toiletries, cutlery, soap and a bucket. Girls also receive a hygiene kit containing a flashlight, laundry soap and reusable sanitary pads."[148] In addition to the reintegration packs, UNICEF and partners provide released children with, "medical care, counseling, education, vocational training and a safe place to live while they recover from the trauma they've experienced."[149]

[138] "Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Service Workforce for Child Protection" UNICEF.
[139] "Safe to Learn," End Violence Against Children, https://www.end-violence.org/safe-to-learn (Accessed July 30, 2021).
[140] "Safe to Learn," End Violence Against Children.
[141] "Safe to Learn," End Violence Against Children,
[142] "Safe to Learn," End Violence Against Children,
[143] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.
[144] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.
[145] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.
[146] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).
[147] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.
[148] "More Than 200 Children Released by Armed Groups in South Sudan," UNICEF, https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/more-200-children-released-armed-groups-south-sudan/34300 (Accessed July 30, 2021).
[149] "Children in Conflict UNICEF Is Working to Free Child Soldiers Around the World," UNICEF.

Current Situation

There are violent extremist groups throughout various regions of the globe that have a history of abducting children for the purposes of using them as child soldiers and for committing many criminal offenses, including, in certain cases, acts of terrorism, war crimes or crimes against humanity.[150] As a result, many children experience violence and various other human rights violations.[151] According to a report published by the United Nations University titled, "Cradled by Conflict: Children in Contemporary Conflict", which documented the previously mentioned violations, between January 2017 and December 2019, "the recruitment and use of children accounted for the greatest number of verified violations, with a total of 3,601 boys and girls affected."[152]

When it comes to violent extremist groups, there are two main factors that contribute to growth and maintenance of violent extremism.[153] These are known as "push" and "pull" factors.[154] "Push" factors are elements that encourage or "push" individuals to join violent extremist groups.[155] Some examples of these factors include marginalization, inequality, and discrimination.[156] Once individuals are drawn to the philosophies of violent extremist groups, or even into the groups themselves, "pull factors" are the various factors that keep these individuals within the world of violent extremism.[157] Furthermore, individuals' feelings of exclusion from their community play a major role in recruitment by violent extremist organizations.[158] These groups can position themselves as an alternative to an individual's own community with promises of a voice that will be heard, a sense of belonging, and an opportunity to be a part of a "greater good."[159] Oftentimes, these groups can become integral pieces in the foundation of a community providing services, offering employment, or even providing a supportive social network in exchange for membership.[160] It is the sense or structure and community that helps nurture the appeal of these groups to individuals.[161] Many international organizations, including the World Bank (WB) and the UN, emphasize how integrating young people into decision-making processes (especially in their own community) is an important action needed to counter the sense of exclusion.[162]

Looking more specifically at the recruitment of children to these aforementioned groups, it becomes pertinent to consider the role the internet plays, and how it is utilized by violent extremists.[163] Many people, including children, are often at risk of being exposed and influenced by propaganda content such as political cartoons, pamphlets, and videos.[164] Understanding the trends of online recruitment will provide valuable insight into effectively preventing further exploitation by these groups.[165]

While the passive recruitment of children through the internet is a more modern issue, the forced recruitment of children through kidnappings or outright violence is not.[166] In the 1970s, the Khmer Rouge exploited thousands of

[150] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[151] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[152] "Understanding Child Soldier Recruitment Needed to Help Curb Crisis," United Nations University.

[153] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244676 (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[154] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[155] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[156] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[157] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[158] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[159] "'Till Martyrdom Do Us Part': Gender and the ISIS Phenomenon," Institute for Strategic Dialogue, https://www.isdglobal.org/wpcontent/uploads/2016/02/Till_Martyrdom_Do_Us_Part_Gender_and_the_ISIS_Phenomenon.pdf (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[160] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[161] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[162] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[163] Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260382 (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[164] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[165] Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research," UNESCO.

[166] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-

desensitized, conscripted children in their early teens to commit mass murder and other atrocities during the Cambodian civil war and subsequent genocide.[167] Meanwhile, Boko Haram has committed mass kidnappings in Nigeria, including the abduction of 276 schoolgirls in Chibok in April 2014 and 110 more girls from a school in Dapchi in March 2018.[168] Many children in various regions across the world are at risk of being forcefully exploited by various violent extremist organizations.[169] According to estimates from the UNODC, since 2009, about 8,000 children have been recruited and used by Boko Haram in Nigeria.[170] Currently, 58 non-state armed groups in 15 Member States are recruiting and using children as soldiers.[171] In Somalia, al Shabaab used detention, violence, and intimidation to recruit roughly 1,770 young people in 2017 alone.[172] ISIL has kidnapped thousands of children from orphanages, schools, and even their families' homes.[173] According to Jessica Trisko Darden, an assistant professor of International Affairs at School of International Service at American University, children under the age of 14 reportedly made up over one-third of the 6,800 Yazidis that ISIL abducted from the town of Sinjar in 2014 alone.[174] A further 800 to 900 children were reportedly kidnapped from Mosul for religious and military training.[175] According to UNODC, children are targeted by these groups because, "their young age and psychological malleability" make them easy targets.[176]

As highlighted by the UNODC, there are three big challenges facing Member States in regard to preventing further recruitment of the youth.[177] Firstly, prevention methods have become rather complex in today's society, especially with the expanding recruitment occurring in today's world via the internet.[178] Additionally, due to their involvement with these extremist groups, children are often in contact with the authorities both on a local and national level once they've dissociated themselves from said extremist groups.[179] This presents a whole set of complications ranging from which legal framework applies to these situations, and the legal status of these children, to which authorities should be handling the matter.[180] As a result, these children, who are stuck in limbo are labeled as 'at-risk' due to their prior knowledge and experience with these violent organizations.[181] This prior knowledge could lead them to be targeted while vulnerable, only to lead to further human rights violations from all parties involved.[182] Violent extremist organizations may put these children in harm's way in order to prevent them from providing information, while law enforcement and members of the community may be looking for retribution for the pain the children have

Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_o f_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).

[167] "Cambodia Diary 6: Child Soldiers Driven by Fear and Hate," Radio Free Asia, https://www.rfa.org/english/features/blogs/cambodiablog/blog6_cambodia_southerland-20060720.html (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[168] Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000260382 (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[169] Youth and Violent Extremism on Social Media: Mapping the Research," UNESCO.

[170] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations, https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/report-secretary-general-children-and-armed-conflict-nigeria-s2017304 (Accessed April 13, 2021).

[171] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations.

[172] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations.

[173] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations.

[174] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations.

[175] "Report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in Nigeria (S/2017/304)," United Nations."

[176] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_o f_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).

[177] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[178] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[179] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[180] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[181] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[182] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

inflicted upon them.[183] All of these factors increase the possibility that these children may be exposed to further violence such as physical and mental abuse and possibly death.[184] Lastly, there is a lack of understanding amongst Member States regarding the rehabilitation and reintegration measures that can be effective in regards to coping with the negative stigma surrounding terrorism and the societies that are directly impacted by them.[185] Oftentimes, rehabilitation practices that work in a region affected by, for example, Boko Haram, are not applicable to the regions impacted by ISIL.[186] There is a lack of balance between a consensus internationally and a consideration for local practices in terms of rehabilitation steps.[187]

Conclusion

Although the involvement of youth in armed conflict is not a new phenomenon, programs to counter violent extremism abroad have yet to make the vulnerability of youth a focal point of their efforts.[188] Children are vulnerable to recruitment by violent extremists organizations oftentimes because of the factors arising from their environment around them, these are known as "push and pull factors."[189] Oftentimes, violent extremist organizations are a vital structural component in their communities and can provide employment opportunities or other benefits to children that often aren't offered elsewhere.[190] Children around the world have also been drawn to violent extremist groups via persuasive propaganda created by these groups including, but not limited to, pamphlets, political cartoons and videos.[191] Even when children aren't being coerced into joining these organizations, many of them are being forced into these groups through abusive methods including kidnapping.[192] Around the world children are abducted in places they frequent, most notably schools by these violent extremist organizations.[193] As a result, they can be forced into committing numerous human rights violations while also becoming victims of human rights violations at the hands of these groups.[194]

Committee Directive

Delegates should be able to answer the following: What push/pull factors do citizens within their specific Member State face? Delegates should challenge themselves to understand what risk children have of being radicalized within their own Member States and what can be done to dissuade children to avoid radicalization via propaganda both in person and online. Delegates should also look at child protection services within their own Member States. How are Member States ensuring the protection of children in areas that are frequently targeted by violent extremist groups, such as schools? For those children who have already fallen victim to these violent extremist groups, what is being

[183] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[184] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC, https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf (Accessed April 12, 2021).

[185] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[186] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[187] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[188] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[189] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[190] "Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," UNODC.

[191] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000244676 (Accessed May 25, 2021).

[192] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[193] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

[194] "A Teacher's Guide on the Prevention of Violent Extremism," UNESCO.

done to ensure their safety as they attempt to be reintegrated back into society? What can be done to ensure their protection from the violent extremist groups they were once a part of? What rehabilitation efforts have been used previously within their Member States?

Annotated Bibliography

Topic I: Addressing the Needs of Homeless Youth Populations

"The Healthcare Needs and Rights of Youth Experiencing Homelessness," Journal of Adolescent Health, September 1, 2018.
https://www.jahonline.org/article/S1054-139X(18)30252-0/fulltext.

> The Journal of Adolescent Health is a peer-reviewed medical journal that publishes articles, commentaries, reports, and position papers that cover adolescent health matters. One issue that the journal addresses is youth homelessness. This position paper establishes a set of principles that can be used when working with youth experiencing homelessness. It includes health concerns of homeless youth populations, services that should be provided, combatting stigmas homeless youth populations face, and how this vulnerable population can be protected. Delegates can use this information when considering how to address the needs of homeless youth populations.

Edidin, Jennifer P., Zoe Ganim, Scott J. Hunter, and Niranjan S. Karnik. "The Mental and Physical Health of Homeless Youth: A Literature Review." *Child Psychiatry & Human Development* 43, no. 3 (November 26, 2011): 354–75. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10578-011-0270-1.

> While the United States is the location focus of this research, it contains valuable information on the mental health of homeless children in general. The authors posit that there are numerous factors starting in the home that led to the rise of youth homelessness, such as abuse and the breakdown of the family unit due to parental abandonment and divorce. These factors on their own are primary sources for the presence of mental illness in youth (classified as individuals under the legal age of 18). From there, homeless youth are at the highest risk of illnesses and abuse at the hands of strangers, thus perpetuating the cycle of shame and bodily harm against an already vulnerable population. Despite increasing awareness of the issues faced by this group, there are still present barriers preventing sustainable healing from these traumas.

Fekadu, Abebaw, Charlotte Hanlon, Emebet Gebre-Eyesus, Melkamu Agedew, Haddis Solomon, Solomon Teferra, Tsehaysina Gebre-Eyesus, et al. "Burden of Mental Disorders and Unmet Needs among Street Homeless People in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia." *BMC Medicine* 12, no. 138 (August 20, 2014). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-014-0138-x.

> As opposed to the previous entry, which focused on research in an economically developed Member State such as the United States, this entry centers its research in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, highlighting a specific concern faced by many developing States. Homeless youth in developing States lack the societal structure to access help and information regarding the treatment of the illnesses they face. Furthermore, pre-existing societal woes, including armed conflict and poverty, are much stronger in lower income States and have a stronger influence on contributing to homelessness across age groups. Compounding issues faced by individuals, NGOs encounter barriers in accessing information about the scope of the effects of homelessness in research focus areas. Therefore, the cycle of homelessness persists without the ability to understand how to properly combat it.

Harpin, Scott B., April S. Elliott, and Colette L. Auerswald. "A Moral Case for Universal Healthcare for Runaway and Homeless Youth." *International Journal of Human Rights in Healthcare* 10, no. 3 (May 17, 2017): 195–202. https://doi.org/10.1108/ijhrh-03-2017-0009.

> In addition to youth rendered homeless by external factors, this study includes the phenomenon of runaways. Youth known as runaways have long been considered a symptom of the breakdown of home dynamics, where individuals leave their homes due to neglect, abuse, or fears of such an occurrence. The authors of this study argue that runaways and homeless youth are just as deserving of access to healthcare and other aid as children in normal family situations, despite the stigma against their circumstances. This argument can be applied to all Member States as a means of being a first step in addressing global youth homelessness.

Topic II: Combating the Exploitation of Children by Violent Extremist Groups

Comer, Jonathan S., Jami M. Furr, Rinad S. Beidas, Courtney L. Weiner, and Philip C. Kendall. "Children and Terrorism-Related News: Training Parents in Coping and Media Literacy." *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology* 76, no. 4 (August 2008): 568–78. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006x.76.4.568.

> This study addresses the influence of media coverage of terrorism-related news and its effect on impressionable children and youth. Its approach to helping children and their parents understand news stories is described as Coping and Media Literacy (CML). The study group included ninety children between the ages of 7 and 13 and their mothers. The study found that, after viewing a news clip about a perceived fear of a future terrorist attack, all the children experienced increased anxiety and elevated fears of national safety. Their mothers were divided into two groups: those who were given pre-study training on CML, and those who were not given the training. Mothers who were trained on CML experienced lower levels of anxiety and were able to have an informed conversation about the clip with their children. Mothers who were not given the training were less likely to reassure their children after watching the news clip. The study highlighted the need for parents to guide their children into an uncertain future and calm their anxieties in a time when random acts of violence are most prevalent.

"Children and armed conflict: Report of the Secretary-General," United Nations General Assembly Security Council, June 20, 2019. https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2019/509&Lang=En Area=UNODC.

> This report addresses the numerous impacts that armed conflicts have on children, including child casualties and maiming, child sex work, the recruitment and use of child soldiers, and abductions. Additionally, it lists the challenges that complicate response, and provides information on how Member States can move forward in combatting these salient issues. The data collection methodology outlined in this report has been in use since 2005 and first began as a response to children's needs during the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan. Since this report is an official publication by the United Nations General Assembly and the United Nations Security Council, it is a highly informative and well-researched document to be used as a basis of research.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. *Expert Group Meeting on The Treatment of Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups by the Justice System.* December 13-15, 2016. https://radical.hypotheses.org/files/2018/01/UNODC.pdf.

> This report, written after a meeting by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), addresses the need for special treatment of children recruited by extremist groups. Children who are recruited by any means, both voluntarily and by force, are individuals who are not willing participants in their own abuse. Even children who are voluntarily recruited are drawn for reasons out of their control, including poverty at home and a need to feel included in a group. Therefore, they should be treated with extra care to ensure that they can safely leave their situations and become empowered individuals in mainstream society. Rescued children face a stigma by their home societies, including their own families, due to the exposure to violence and mental illness that comes from coping with such a trauma, and may face homelessness and the risk of being recruited again. Where they are failed by the people most familiar to them, it is up to organizations such as UNICEF to fill in the gaps.

"Handbook on Children Recruited and Exploited by Terrorist and Violent Extremist Groups: The Role of the Justice System," United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2017. https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/Child-Victims/Handbook_on_Children_Recruited_and_Exploited_by_Terrorist_and_Violent_Extremist_Groups_the_Role_of_the_Justice_System.E.pdf.

> This handbook, curated by the UNODC, addresses how children are recruited and exploited by terrorist and violent extremist groups. The handbook includes challenges to attempts to locate and rescue recruited children, how recruitment of children can be prevented, and how children can be better protected from the

circumstances that push them towards group recruitment. It also includes various statistics that illuminate the vastness and seriousness of the issue. While the handbook emphasizes the role of the justice system in accessing child recruitment and exploitation, Delegates can use it as a resource to begin to learn more about the issue.

Bloom, Mia. "Weaponizing the Weak: The Role of Children in Terrorist Groups." *Washington & Lee Public Legal Studies Research Paper Series* No. 2019-06 (January 14, 2019): 1–19. https://ssrn.com/abstract=3316395

Extremist organizations have a history of targeting children as potential recruits for carrying out violence due to their inherent vulnerability. Children are easier to manipulate than adults because of a perceived naivety and lack of life experience. By exploiting children, extremist groups are able to fly under the radar and avoid being caught by anti-terrorist organizations. The author of this article describes strategies used by group leaders as "grooming tactics"; not only are anti-terrorist organizations less likely to suspect children as capable of committing violence, but children can be recruited without force if they believe that the group can provide something that their own families can't. The article urges anti-terrorist groups to refocus their efforts on understanding the tactics by extremists to trick children into becoming willing participants in their own abuse and possible deaths.