
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 120: President Biden’s State of the Union, Earthquakes in Türkiye & Syria, and International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

February 13, 2023,

Quick Summary

Multiple earthquakes and dozens of aftershocks [hit](#) southeast Türkiye and Syria last week, resulting in over 20,000 deaths including children and youth, and exacerbating the long-standing humanitarian crisis in that region. According to UNICEF, “It is likely that schools, hospitals, and other medical and educational facilities will have been damaged or destroyed by the quakes, further impacting children. Potential damage to roads and critical infrastructure will also complicate search and rescue efforts and the wider humanitarian response.” This natural disaster has compounded the already-existing humanitarian crisis that has affected the region for decades. UNICEF highlights that “Children in Syria continue to face one of the most complex humanitarian situations in the world. A worsening economic crisis continued localized hostilities after more than a decade of grinding conflict, mass displacement, and devastated public infrastructure have left two-thirds of the population in need of

assistance. Food insecurity, reliance on unreliable and alternative water sources protection concerns, and high levels of school dropouts are acute.” To read up-to-date information about this crisis, click [here](#).

International [Day](#) of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) was last week, with multiple governments, agencies, and organizations elevating the issue that affects more than 200 million girls globally. This year, the UNFPA-UNICEF Joint Programme theme was "Partnership with Men and Boys to transform Social and gender Norms to End FGM". They called on “the global community to partner with men and boys and foster their engagement to accelerate the elimination of this harmful practice and uplift the voices of women and girls.” The UN recommends that “to promote the elimination of female genital mutilation, coordinated and systematic efforts are needed, and they must engage whole communities and focus on human rights, gender equality, sexual education and attention to the needs of women and girls who suffer from its consequences.” To read more about this day, click [here](#).

The U.S. Department of State [imposed](#) additional sanctions on members of the Taliban over the ban on women and girls having access to education and participating in NGOs. According to the State Department’s brief, the US government is imposing “additional visa restrictions on certain current or former Taliban members, members of non-state security groups, and other individuals believed to be responsible for, or complicit in, repressing women and girls in Afghanistan through restrictive policies and violence, including the Taliban’s decision to ban women from universities and from working with NGOs. The immediate family members of such persons may also be subject to these visa restrictions, enacted under Section 212(a)(3)(C) (“3C”) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.” Currently, over a million school-aged girls have been banned from attending school. To learn more, click [here](#).

UNICEF Canada published a child impact statement tool for Parliamentarians titled “The Child Policy Lens.” This child impact tool aims to be “used within governmental policymaking and regulatory processes to provide a systematic analysis of potential impacts of public decisions. Canada’s federal, provincial, and territorial governments use a range of impact assessment lenses including gender, environment, privacy, official languages, health, and equity.” This child policy lens is “designed as a ‘cue card’ with 12 questions elected officials can ask to evaluate policies through the lens of their impact on children and youth.” Click [here](#) to read the cue card and to read more about this tool.

Spotlight

U.S. President Joe Biden delivered the State of the Union to Congress, with multiple mentions of children and youth.

President Biden [called](#) on lawmakers and Big Tech companies alike to stop targeting children and youth online and protect them from harm. He stated that “We must finally hold social media companies accountable for the experiment they are running on our children for profit.” He followed this by stating that “it’s time to pass bipartisan legislation to stop Big Tech from collecting personal data on kids and teenagers online, ban targeted advertising to children, and impose stricter limits on the personal data these companies collect on all of us.”

This follows other countries in their worries about Big Tech companies. In August 2022, the Philippines [declared](#) “war” against online child sexual exploitation. The Philippines has “ become the world’s largest known [source](#) of online child sexual exploitation, with endemic poverty helping drive a surge in abuse.” Additionally, Singapore has passed legislation to empower “authorities to order social media platforms Facebook, TikTok, and others to remove ‘egregious content’ such as those promoting self-harm, sexual exploitation, terrorism, and hate.”

One of the Children’s Policy and Funding Initiative (CPFII) grantees, ChildFund, has [spearheaded](#) the issue of addressing the explosive increase in online sexual exploitation and abuse of children (OSEAC). They are “bringing together domestic and internationally focused civil society organizations that are working to address OSEAC from different angles – including awareness raising, survivor support, law enforcement training, technology development – into one space to break down silos and identify better ways of working together to advance stronger, more holistic OSEAC-related policies.” ChildFund also created a policy mapping report, which you can find [here](#).

Additionally, President Biden called out the state of youth mental health. He highlighted that “When millions of young people are struggling with bullying, violence, trauma, we owe them greater access to mental health care at school.” Children and youth globally face bullying, violence, and trauma and need greater access to mental health resources. CPFII grantee UNICEF USA and others have advocated for the MINDS Act ([H.R. 3988](#)) in the U.S. This act will “support the integration of mental health services in U.S. foreign assistance programming, with a particular focus on children, their families, and other vulnerable populations.” To read more about the MINDS Act, click [here](#).

To learn more and read President Biden’s State of the Union address, click [here](#).

Events

- The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs [session](#) **“61st Session of the Commission for Social Development – CSocD61.”** February 6-15, 2023.
- U.S. Department of State’s Secretary’s Office of Global Women’s Issues (S/GWI) and Women In International Security (WIIS) [webinar](#) **“Gender and Technology: Designing Pathways for an Equitable Future.”** February 15, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- First Focus [webinar](#) **“Ambassadors Network: U.S. immigration policies & their impact on children.”** February 15, 2023, at 7 pm ET.
- Education Cannot Wait (ECW) High-Level Financing Conference [side event](#) **“From Challenges to Change: Journeys to Disability-Inclusive Education and Learning Equity in Emergencies.”** February 17, 2023, at 2 am ET.
- Youth Health Organization [conference](#) **“Portorož Youth Health Forum.”** February 21-26, 2023.
- YouthPower2 Middle East and North Africa Youth CoP [webinar](#) **“Youth and Women in Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (GBV) Prevention in Conflict Zones.”** Wednesday, February 22, 2023, at 8:30 am ET.
- Transforming Children’s Care Task Force on Family Strengthening [virtual event](#) **“Social Protection Learning Event.”** February 23, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Breaking Bread from House to House: Dinner and Conversation about Care for Orphaned and Vulnerable Children.”** February 26, 2023, at 5:30 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Building Hope and Resilience: The Dynamics of Cultural Change and Transformation in Child Safeguarding: Lifting Up Voices from the Classroom and the Pew.”** February 27, 2023, at 12 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Children and Changemaking in the Midst of a Climate Crisis.”** February 27, 2023, at 4 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [event](#) **“Film Screening: ‘The Good Lie’.”** February 27, 2023, at 6 pm ET.
- USAID Higher Education Learning Network (HELN) [virtual event](#) **“Stories of Inclusive Access to Higher Education.”** February 28, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children’s Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Indigenous Communities, Intergenerational Knowledge, and Climate Change in Mesoamerica.”** February 28, 2023, at 9 am ET.

- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Building Participatory Landscapes for Policy and Research: Working Alongside Young People in the Field.”** February 28, 2023, at 12:30 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Healing with Humor: A Physical Workshop on the Power of Play.”** March 1, 2023, at 11 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Do You See Me? How to Support Children Separated from their Families.”** March 1, 2023, at 2 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Songs and Stories of Adversity and Resilience.”** March 1, 2023, at 6 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Protecting the Rights of Children with Disabilities.”** March 2, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“The Case for Including Children and Youth in Foreign Assistance.”** March 2, 2023, at 12:30 pm ET.
- Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues Children in a World of Challenges Workshop Series [hybrid event](#) **“Living Through the Unthinkable: Supporting Children and Families during Russia's War with Ukraine.”** March 2, 2023, at 4 pm ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- Devex [article](#) **“What will happen to foreign aid in US Congress in 2023?”**
- Devex [article](#) **“Exclusive: Top Republican urges State Department to rethink Syria aid.”**
- New York Times [investigation](#) **“Musk Pledged to Cleanse Twitter of Child Abuse Content. It's Been Rough Going.”**
- OECD Development Centre [article](#) **“Philanthropy And Youth Empowerment: Foundations' Innovative Approaches To Support Youth.”**
- Elevate Children Funders Group [report](#) **“Manufacturing Moral Panic: Weaponizing Children to Undermine Gender Justice and Human Rights.”**
- UNICEF [publication](#) **“Engaging Boys and Men to End Female Genital Mutilation.”**
- The Lancet journal [publication](#) **“Partnering to deliver sustainable children's surgical care in Kakuma refugee camp.”**
- UNESCO [report](#) **“Ready to learn and thrive: school health and nutrition around the world.”**

- PMNCH [article](#) “Three ways to protect the health of the world's most vulnerable women, children and adolescents.”
- WHO [Initiative](#) “WHO Youth Council.”

Professional Opportunities

Childhood Education International is accepting applications from U.S.-based teachers for a virtual exchange program with teachers in Serbia. The program is supported by the U.S. Department of State and in collaboration with the Center for Interactive Pedagogy in Serbia. The program includes a small honorarium and 0.5 CEUs for the successful completion of the requirements. Click [here](#) to **apply by March 1, 2023.**

The [Early Childhood Development Task Force \(ECDtf\)](#) is an international network of volunteer professionals and family members who collaborate and share information toward the common goal of ensuring that children with developmental delays or disabilities can achieve their full potential. If you would like to join the network, please do so [here](#).



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