
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 143: YPS Act Reintroduction, Senate Commerce Committee Hearing, & U.S. Helsinki Committee Hearing.

July 31, 2023

Calls for Action

The Faith and the Family Forum, organized by Catholic Relief Services and Georgetown University's Collaborative on Global Children's Issues, seeks contributions on the topic of child-family separation across historical and regional contexts, with a focus on the Roman Catholic faith. Participants are encouraged to explore the role of religious beliefs in justifying or opposing child-family separation in various contexts, including American slavery, indigenous communities, children's residential care, and migration policy. The forum is accepting written, audio, and video submissions from researchers, faith community members, and stakeholders. The submissions should address specific topics related to theology, orphan care, enslavement/trafficking, indigenous communities, migration, and the Church's response to child-family separation. To read more about this call for submissions, click [here](#). Submissions are due by August 31, 2023.

The Second Lancet [Commission](#) on Adolescent Health and Wellbeing is conducting research to understand youth perspectives on engagement within youth advisory councils, boards, groups, committees, or youth leadership groups. They have developed an online survey and interview questions to gather insights on the experiences of current and past youth council members, including the facilitators and barriers to youth-led participation. They are seeking participants who are or were members of such youth advisory groups to learn about their engagement in research, programs, policy, and practice. The Commission aims to analyze and aggregate the data without revealing any personal or organizational identifying information. The findings will be used to understand various models of youth advisory councils worldwide, develop recommendations and indicators for meaningful youth engagement in programs, policy, and practice.. The survey [link](#) will be open until July 31st. For further questions, participants can contact YACStudy@drexel.edu.

Quick Summary

The International Children with Disabilities Protection Act ([S.847](#)) passed in the Senate version of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) ([S.2226](#)). This provision will allocate funding to empower organizations and families advocating for the well-being of children with disabilities globally, who often face obstacles in finding loving families and thriving in their communities. Senators Bob Menendez and Jerry Moran championed the International Children with Disabilities Protection Act. Chairman Menendez stated that “As the United States seeks to invest in solutions to ongoing global issues, one of my measures will help uplift children with disabilities around the world who are frequently denied the opportunity to grow up in a family and thrive in their communities.” There is growing evidence showing that enhancing family and community well-being has a direct correlation to achieving more secure and stable societies. To read more about the NDAA, click [here](#).

The Youth Peace and Security Act ([H.Res.____](#)) was [reintroduced](#) in the House by Representatives Grace Meng ([D-NY](#)), Brian Fitzpatrick ([R-PA](#)), Dean Phillips ([D-MN](#)), Mike Lawler ([R-NY](#)), Sydney Kamlager-Dove ([D-CA](#)), and María Salazar ([R-FL](#)). This act focuses on promoting youth leadership and involvement in peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts worldwide. It aims to ensure meaningful youth participation in conflict prevention, management, resolution, and post-conflict activities. The bill would require the USAID Youth Coordinator to oversee cross-sectoral international development efforts related to youth, including exchanges between USAID and diverse youth leaders and organizations working towards youth, peace, and security. The coordinator would also submit a plan to Congress outlining steps to

achieve these goals. The legislators emphasize the importance of including young people in decision-making conversations, particularly since they are often disproportionately affected by conflict and violence. The act is seen as an investment in the leaders of tomorrow to foster positive development and promote a more stable and peaceful world. Senator Cory Booker plans to introduce the Senate version of the bill in the coming months. To read the bill, click [here](#).

The Senate Commerce [Committee](#) held an Executive [Session](#) to consider various pieces of legislation, including the Kids Online Safety Act ([S.1409](#)) and the Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act ([S.1418](#)). The Kids Online Safety Act aims to protect minors from online harms by imposing requirements on covered platforms, which are internet applications or services likely to be used by minors. The bill mandates covered platforms to act in the best interest of minors by mitigating potential harms like sexual exploitation and online bullying. Additionally, covered platforms must provide safeguards to minors and their parents or guardians, including settings to restrict access to personal data and tools for supervising platform usage. The Children and Teens' Online Privacy Protection Act aims to amend the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act of 1998 to strengthen protections relating to the online collection, use, and disclosure of personal information of children and teens, and for other purposes. To watch the hearing, click [here](#).

Spotlight

The House Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the [U.S. Helsinki Commission](#), held a [hearing](#) titled “Rescuing Ukrainian Children and Women from Russia’s Aggression.” The hearing addressed critical issues facing Ukrainian women and children... They focused on finding ways for the United States and the international community to better protect them from the trauma of war and prevent human trafficking. Additionally, various Members of Congress highlighted the proposed bill called Oleksandr’s Act, which aims to take action in response to these challenges and safeguard children who have suffered during the war.

The conflict has increased the vulnerability of Ukrainian women and children to human trafficking. Of the 8 million refugees who fled Ukraine, [90% are women and children](#). Reports [suggest](#) that traffickers have been preying on refugees, offering false promises of accommodation, transportation, and employment. Additionally, nearly two-thirds of Ukraine's children have been [displaced](#), with thousands injured and hundreds killed. There have been close to 20,000 [documented](#) cases of children forcibly taken to Russia or Russian-controlled areas, potentially amounting to genocide under the Geneva Convention.

The hearing included testimonies from high-level officials, including the U.S. Ambassador at Large for Global Criminal Justice, [Dr. Beth Van Schaack](#), and U.S. Ambassador at Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, [Cindy Dyer](#). Ukrainian Prosecutor General [Andriy Kostin](#), former Volunteer Coordinator for the Polish Red Cross, [Sebastian Stachowski](#), Save Ukraine Director and former Presidential Commissioner for Human Rights, [Mykola Kuleba](#), and [Dr. James S. Gordon](#) from The Center for Mind-Body Medicine also provided insights.

During the hearing, Chairman Rep. Joe Wilson ([R-SC](#)) condemned Russia's actions, stating that kidnapping Ukrainian children for russification amounts to genocide. He also highlighted the concerning reports of Belarus's involvement in aiding Russia's efforts to take Ukrainian children. Rep. Wilson emphasized the need for stronger international responses to combat trafficking along border areas. Ambassador Van Schaack acknowledged the severity of the situation, mentioning the UN Secretary General's report that holds Russian armed forces responsible for killing and maiming hundreds of children in 2022 alone. She expressed her commitment to work with Congress on a legislative proposal to criminalize crimes against humanity and prevent perpetrators from seeking refuge in the United States. Ranking Member Rep. Cohen ([D-TN](#)) supported the notion of declaring the situation as genocide and denounced the separation of children from their parents, attributing these actions to Russian President Vladimir Putin's indifference to human suffering.

To learn more and rewatch this hearing, click [here](#).

Events

- USAID Latin American and the Caribbean (LAC) Regional Hub [webinar](#) **“Improving the Learning Outcomes of Youth in LAC.”** August 3, 2023, at 11 am ET.
- Child Health Task Force [webinar](#) **“Giving Children the Best Start in Life: Resources, Experiences, and Lessons Learned from USAID Advancing Nutrition’s Work Integrating Nutrition, Responsive Care, and Early Learning.”** August 8, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- YouthPower2 Gender CoP [virtual workshop](#) **“Empowering Futures: Unleashing Potential with the Gender and Youth Analysis Toolkit.”** August 10, 2023 at 9 am ET.
- 1.8 Billion Young People for Change [event](#) **“Global Forum for Adolescents.”** October 11-12, 2023.
- OECD [hybrid event](#) **“OECD Sustainable Investment Days.”** November 7-8, 2023.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- BBC News [article](#) “Yemen: The children of a forgotten war.”
- Devex [article](#) “What the localization conversation is getting wrong.”
- Elevate Children Funders Group [publication](#) “Framework to Decolonize Child & Youth Philanthropy.”
- Devex [article](#) “DevExplains: Why the food crisis is worse for women and girls.”
- The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health [report](#) “Prioritizing displaced children in the global refugee agenda.”
- UNICEF [report](#) “Children with Disabilities in Eastern and Southern Africa: A statistical overview of their well-being.”

Professional Opportunity

SPOON is currently looking to hire a Program Officer and Consultant to assist in their international programs and Disability-Inclusive Child Development Course.

The Program Officer will work with the Program Team and partners globally to manage and enhance SPOON projects. The full job description and application details can be found [here](#).

Additionally, SPOON is seeking a consultant to create a business plan for the Disability-Inclusive Child Development Course. This course was developed by a consortium of organizations dedicated to working with children with disabilities worldwide. Click here to learn more and [apply](#).



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