
The Weekly Pulse

NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



Vol. 154: Israel-Hamas Conflict & International Day of the Girl Child

October 16, 2023

Quick Summary

In early October 2023, a new round of conflict [erupted](#) when Hamas launched rocket attacks into Israel and conducted violent incursions into Israel's southern neighboring cities. Hamas brutally assaulted families and captured civilian as hostages including children. Israel declared war against Hamas and imposed a "complete siege" on Gaza to go after Hamas, prompting the displacement of an estimated fifty percent of the Palestinian population of northern Gaza to flee for safety in the south. Deaths among Israelis and Palestinians continue to mount. The conflict is considered one of the most significant escalations in the region in recent decades, with mounting concerns about civilian casualties and possible involvement by other forces in the region.

UNICEF Spokesperson James Elder, at a [press briefing](#) on October 10, 2023, expressed deep concern over the ongoing conflict-related violence affecting children in

Israel and the State of Palestine. He described the dire situation, with numerous children losing their lives or being injured in the past few days. UNICEF and other international humanitarian organizations are calling for an immediate cessation of hostilities and reminding all parties of their obligations under International Humanitarian Law to protect children. To read the full statement, click [here](#).

UNICEF held a [webinar](#) titled "National Child Tracking Systems: Successful Systems of Chile and Colombia." Attendees had the opportunity to gain insights into the child tracking systems of these two nations. The event featured Ana María Peñuela, Director of Early Childhood at the Ministry of Education of Colombia, and Jeanet Leguas, Director of the Programmatic Department at Chile Crece Contigo, the Early Childhood National Program of the Ministry of Social Development of Chile. The discussion, moderated by Carlos del Castillo of the RISE Institute, shed light on the efforts of both countries in tracking and supporting children's development. It was emphasized that Latin America and the Caribbean are witnessing an alarming increase in child migration. Children now constitute a significant portion of the migrant population, facing perils as they journey through regions plagued by gang violence, instability, poverty, and climate-related events. To learn more and rewatch the event, click [here](#).

Spotlight: International Day of the Girl Child

In acknowledgment of the International Day of the Girl Child 2023, U.S. Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken [underscored](#) the United States' dedication to promoting the rights and empowerment of girls and young women globally. He noted that girls face various challenges, including climate-related disasters, conflicts, education disruptions due to COVID-19, technology-facilitated gender-based violence, child marriage, and female genital mutilation. Nevertheless, girls demonstrate resilience and play an essential role in driving positive change worldwide. To support girls' civic and political participation, the U.S. Department of State, in collaboration with USAID, launched the Women's and Girls' Civic and Political Participation Strategy. This strategy outlines the U.S. government's commitment to addressing barriers to girls' participation and enhancing their access to civic education and leadership development opportunities.

The U.S. [Strategy](#) on Global Girls' Civic and Political Participation for 2023 aims to empower girls and young women to become civic and political leaders, recognizing the importance of their voices in driving positive change. Globally, there is a significant gender gap in political representation, with only 26.5 percent of parliamentarians being women, and just 2.6 percent under the age of 30. Gender inequality underlies the multiple obstacles girls and women face when pursuing

leadership roles. Adolescent girls encounter various forms of gender-based violence, including technology-facilitated gender-based violence and child, early, and forced marriage, limiting their access to quality education and pathways to leadership. Achieving gender balance in political participation at the current rate would take 145.5 years. This report outlines U.S. global priorities concerning the involvement of adolescent girls in civic and political processes through policy, public diplomacy, and programming efforts. To read the report, click [here](#).

Additionally, the Youth Alliance Working Group (YAWG) of the Children's Policy and Funding Initiative and the Student Consortium on WPS wrote a joint [op-ed](#) titled "International Day of the Girl Child 2023: Analyzing the Status of Afghan Girls Two Years after the Taliban Takeover through the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) and Youth, Peace, and Security (YPS) Agendas."

The WPS Agenda, established following the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, aims to address the disproportionate impact of violent conflict on women and children. It encompasses four key pillars, focusing on the participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery of women and girls in conflict situations. In response to UNSCR 1325, many UN Member States developed National Action Plans (NAPs) outlining their strategies for implementing the WPS agenda. However, some NAPs have expired, raising concerns about their continued commitment to these goals. The YPS Agenda, initiated in 2015 with UNSCR 2250, recognizes the role of young people in peace processes. This agenda comprises five pillars, including participation, protection, prevention, partnership, and disengagement and reintegration. Both agendas subvert stereotypes by emphasizing that women and young people are not just perpetrators or victims of violence but can also be agents of peace.

These parallel UNSCR resolutions intersect to create a sustainable framework for achieving and maintaining peace globally. However, the situation in Afghanistan presents unique challenges due to the recent Taliban rule and the implementation of strict Sharia law, which significantly impacts the rights and opportunities for girls and women. To read the full op-ed, click [here](#).

Events

- USAID Local Capacity Strengthening Policy Learning & Feedback Forum [plenary event](#) "Effective LCS" Highlighting Principles 1-3." October 17, 2023, at 7:30 am ET.
- GCE-US [virtual event](#) "GCE-US October Coalition Meeting." October 17, 2023, at 9 am ET.

- USAID Local Capacity Strengthening Policy Learning & Feedback Forum [side event](#) **“Strengthening the Ecosystem for Locally-led Development.”** October 17, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- Center for Global Development [webinar](#) **“Sankofa: Appreciating the Past in Planning the Future of Early Childhood Education, Care, and Development in Africa.”** October 19, 2023, at 10 am ET.
- Center for Global Development [webinar](#) **“What Works to Improve Numeracy at Scale? Key Takeaways from Six Featured Programs.”** October 24, 2023, at 9 am ET.
- Transforming Children’s Care Collaborative [webinar](#) **“Making an Investment Case for Family Care - Recent Experience from Moldova.”** October 25, 2023, at 9 am ET.

Reports, Articles & Resources

- International Watch Foundation [article](#) **“Hotline reports ‘shocking’ rise in the sextortion of boys.”**
- PLAN International [report](#) **“The State of the World’s Girls Report 2023.”**
- Inter-agency Network for Education in Emergencies [report](#) **“Mind the Gap 3: Equity and Inclusion in and through Girls’ Education in Crisis.”**
- Oak Foundation and Safer Young Lives Research Centre [report](#) **“Seeing things from both sides: A comic to help young people and professionals understand each other’s views about young survivors’ participation in efforts to address child sexual abuse and exploitation.”**
- Office of the United Nations Secretary-General’s Envoy on Youth (OSGEY) [report](#) **“Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security Agenda at Country-level A Guide for Public Officials.”**



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