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# *The Weekly Pulse*

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NEWS FROM ORGANIZATIONS AND COALITIONS IN GLOBAL CHILD ADVOCACY



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Vol. 163: Georgetown University Event, USAID's Children in Adversity Office, & 2023 Global Refugee Forum

December 18, 2023

This week's newsletter will be the **last one for the year with updates resuming Monday, January 8th, 2024**. We hope everyone has an amazing holiday season and a Happy New Year!

## Call to Action

The Commonwealth Children and Youth Disability Network, Include Me TOO, the Global Network of Young Persons with Disabilities, and the Commonwealth Secretariat is asking individuals to participate in its [survey](#) titled "Survey on Young People with Disabilities Participation, Representation and Leadership in Disability Rights Advocacy and Public Decision Making" is conducted as part of a research project for the Year of Youth 2023 to 2024. The survey targets individuals aged 13 to 35 with disabilities, seeking insights into their experiences and access to participation, representation, and leadership in Disability Rights Advocacy Spaces and

Public Decision-Making Processes. Participants are encouraged to share personal experiences, challenges, and instances of being heard and included on issues important to them. The collected data will be used to compile a report and host an online event in 2024, aiming to inform and enhance the participation, representation, and leadership of young people with disabilities in disability rights advocacy and decision-making processes. The [survey](#) is accepting responses until March 13, 2024. Please contact [CCYDN@includemetoo.org.uk](mailto:CCYDN@includemetoo.org.uk) if you have any questions. To learn more about this survey, click [here](#).

## Quick Summary

**USAID's Children in Adversity Office [held](#) a listening session on the Advancing Protection and Care for Children in Adversity (APCCA) Strategy**, which was attended by civil society and interagency colleagues. They presented a comprehensive overview of the APCCA priorities, including a timeline and key insights from previous consultations. USAID was interested in learning more about which priority issues for children in adversity civil society is addressing. **The Children in Adversity office also flagged that there will be an announcement of the public comment period which will likely start in the coming week and go through January 12th.** This timeframe is pending internal clearances and processes. To learn more, click [here](#).

**At the 2023 Global Refugee [Forum](#), held from December 13-15, the United States announced a series of commitments to address the needs of refugees and host communities amid historic displacement.** Comprising 26 unique commitments across eight multi-stakeholder pledges, the U.S. actively collaborated with global partners to enhance refugee resettlement opportunities, promote comprehensive responses, and address evolving needs.

Concurrently with its dedication to Gender Equality and Protection from Gender-based Violence (GBV), the U.S. committed to prioritizing gender-based violence prevention, mitigation, and response across global humanitarian efforts. Through the Safe from the Start ReVisioned [initiative](#), the nation sought to drive increased representation and leadership of women and girls in decision-making structures and implemented survivor-centered response programming. Additionally, the U.S. pledged to strengthen GBV service delivery in food insecure environments by supporting the UNHCR-World Food Program Joint Programme of Excellence in Targeting [Hub](#) to collect gender-sensitive data on food insecurity and vulnerability analysis. Further emphasizing its commitment, the U.S. aimed to foster greater inclusion of refugee-hosting states within the Call to Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies. Advocacy efforts encouraged refugee-hosting countries to join this initiative, highlighting the collective

responsibility to address gender-based violence in emergency situations. The U.S. underscored its commitment to Refugee-Inclusive Education.

Additionally, the U.S. advocated for the inclusion of refugees in national education systems, incentivizing their participation in development-funded education programs in locations where host countries had favorable inclusion policies. Additionally, refugees were incorporated into the U.S. Government [Strategy](#) on Interagency Basic Education. The U.S. advocated for refugee inclusion in multilateral engagements, including the Global [Partnership](#) for Education hosted by the World Bank and Education Cannot Wait hosted by UNICEF. These efforts reflected the comprehensive strategies employed by the U.S. and its partners to champion gender equality, protect against gender-based violence, and advocate for the inclusion of refugees in educational systems worldwide. To learn more about this event and announcements, click [here](#).

**Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) introduced “A bill to support empowerment, economic security, and educational opportunities for adolescent girls around the world, and for other purposes.” (S.3535).** Senator Lisa Murkowski ([R-AK](#)) joined Senator Shaheen for the introduction of this bipartisan bill. More information to come. To follow this legislation, click [here](#).

**In a recent White House [meeting](#), Jennifer Klein, Assistant to the President and Director of the Gender Policy Council, along with other senior officials, engaged with Dr. Cochav Elkayam-Levy, Chair of Israel’s Civil Commission on October 7 Crimes by Hamas Against Women and Children.** The meeting focused on addressing the disturbing reports of sexual violence inflicted by Hamas on Israeli women and children during the October 7 attacks. President Biden's administration expressed deep concern and emphasized the importance of acknowledging and addressing the brutality described by survivors and witnesses. Dr. Elkayam-Levy shared her efforts to collect testimonies and evidence related to the events of October 7, aiming to create a comprehensive account of gender-based violence committed by Hamas. The participants discussed the urgent need to condemn such acts unequivocally and emphasized the international community's role in holding perpetrators accountable and supporting survivors. Director Klein reiterated President Biden's commitment to utilizing financial, diplomatic, and legal mechanisms to address sexual violence in conflict. Click [here](#) to read the full press briefing.

**In Gaza, the humanitarian situation remains dire.** UNICEF’s latest Situation Report (No.9) covers the period from 30 November to 6 December 2023. With 1.9 million people displaced, hostilities have resumed following a humanitarian pause, leading to a severe contraction of both humanitarian and physical space. The ongoing conflict has

resulted in significant casualties, with 17,177 Palestinians and 1,200 Israelis and foreign nationals reportedly killed, along with over 46,000 and 7,500 injured, respectively.

**Children are disproportionately affected, with more than 5,350 reported killed and 8,663 injured.** Click [here](#) to read the full report.

**USAID announced that additional humanitarian assistance of over \$21 million will be provided for the Palestinian people in Gaza and the West Bank.** The new funding aims to support over 120,000 individuals with essential hygiene, shelter, food, and market-based assistance. It will also address psychosocial care and critical health services, particularly for Gaza's health system, where 60 percent of hospitals are non-operational. Additionally, the funding will help establish an NGO-operated field hospital in Gaza. Simultaneously, at the request of USAID, the U.S. Central Command delivered 16.3 metric tons of UN medical supplies, winter clothing, and food to address immediate needs. This follows a previous airlift of over 54,000 pounds of UN supplies. The United States has been actively collaborating with regional and global partners to address the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, aiming to overcome diplomatic and operational challenges and increase the scale of the humanitarian response. To read the full press release, click [here](#).

**In her [remarks](#) at the First Meeting of the International Coalition of Countries for the Return of Ukrainian Children,** Deputy Administrator Isobel Coleman expressed gratitude to President Zelenskyy for addressing the pressing issue of returning Ukrainian children to their families and safety. The United States, joining Ukrainian and international partners, sees the coalition's formation as a crucial step towards shared goals: reuniting abducted Ukrainian children with their families, restoring their health, safety, and dignity, and preventing future injustices. Coleman condemned the Russian occupiers for mercilessly abducting thousands of Ukrainian children since February 2022, employing coercion, deception, and brutality. She highlighted the vulnerability of targeted groups, including orphans and children with disabilities, who were detained in Russian institutions, sometimes with changed identities. Less than two percent of over 19,000 displaced children have returned home. Coleman emphasized the trauma suffered by these children, the breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the U.S. commitment to stand with Ukraine. The USAID supports initiatives like Save Ukraine, which has rescued 213 children, and funds organizations monitoring captive children's locations. The U.S. government also backs justice initiatives documenting Russia's systematic approach to forcibly transferring and indoctrinating Ukrainian children. Coleman called for urgent, coordinated action by governments, civil society, and international organizations to ensure a better future for these children. To learn more about this event, click [here](#).

## Spotlight

**The Georgetown University Collaborative on Global Children's Issues held a [webinar](#) titled "Is Our Conscience Revolted? A Conversation on Children in War, Grounded in Rights and Faith."** The webinar focused on the common commitment among the world's religious traditions to values centered on children and families. The conversation delved into the explicit rights of every child to essentials like food, health, shelter, education, and support from parents and communities. The webinar underscored that, **despite the comprehensive legal frameworks established under international human rights law, international humanitarian law, and international criminal law, the commitments face severe challenges during times of war and conflict, disproportionately impacting children.**

[Dr. Rima Salah](#), former UNICEF Deputy Executive Director and Regional Director for West and Central Africa emphasized the unforgivable nature of children being assaulted, violated, and murdered in conflict zones. The event discussed the fundamental crisis in civilization represented by the lack of a revolted conscience and challenged dignity in the face of such atrocities. It highlighted the deliberate attacks on children in the Israel-Gaza conflict, where thousands of children were killed, injured, and taken hostage, contributing to deep divides and polarization.

The webinar explored how the conversation about conflicts might change when centered on children and their rights. It underscored the importance of intergenerational dialogue within religious communities to address the most challenging issues faced by children in war zones. Key questions included how religious institutions and faith communities can uphold commitments to children's rights and protection, as well as the impact of war on children's mental health, moral compass, and capacity for empathy. Additionally, the discussion considered whether these impacts on young minds could exacerbate and prolong the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, jeopardizing future possibilities of conflict transformation, peace, and security. To learn more about this event, click [here](#).

## Events

- Primero [webinar](#) **"Primero Data Challenge 2023: Q4 Edition For 2024."** December 19, 2023, at 8 am ET.
- The Zero Project [hybrid event](#) **"The Zero Project Conference 2024: Inclusive Education, and ICT."** February 21-24, 2024.
- World Without Orphans [event](#) **"Global Forum for a World Without Orphans."** February 29, 2024.
- USAID [event](#) **"2024 Global Education Conference."** April 15-19, 2024.

## Reports, Articles & Resources

- USAID Education in Crisis and Conflict [article](#) **“Joy and Play Build Resilience in Crisis-Affected Early Childhood Summary.”**
- Health Affairs [report](#) **“Adolescent Social Outcomes Declined During COVID-19: Evidence From Bangladesh, Jordan, And Ethiopia.”**
- IREX [article](#) **“Lessons Learned from Implementing SHE’s GREAT! in Seven Countries.”**
- AP [article](#) **“‘I feel trapped’: Scores of underage Rohingya girls forced into abusive marriages in Malaysia.”**
- Human Rights Watch [report](#) **“Abused by Relatives, Ignored by the State: Domestic Violence Against and Neglect of Women and Girls with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan.”**



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