



STICHTING DE FACTO JUSTICE

A Generation in Chains:
Grave Violations Against Children in
Conflict and Political Repression

UNITED NATIONS WORLD CHILDREN'S DAY

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About Us

Stichting De Facto Justice is a non-profit organization committed to advancing justice, equality, and fairness within society. Founded with the vision of a legal system that serves every individual—regardless of social or economic background—we work to address systemic inequalities and ensure that all people have meaningful access to their rights. Our mission is grounded in the belief that justice must be both impartial and accessible, and that no one should be excluded from legal protections due to financial, social, or structural barriers.

Our work focuses on four interconnected areas. Through **legal advocacy**, we strive to influence policies and practices that shape a just and equitable legal framework, tackling legal obstacles that prevent individuals from seeking redress. Our **community outreach** initiatives aim to strengthen legal awareness, promote civic engagement, and empower individuals with the knowledge needed to understand and assert their rights. We also provide **legal support** to those who face financial or practical difficulties in accessing legal representation, offering guidance and assistance through a dedicated team of legal professionals and volunteers. In addition, our **research and collaborative efforts** focus on identifying and addressing the root causes of systemic injustice. By partnering with aligned

organizations, experts, and community actors, we work collectively toward long-term, positive change.

Stichting De Facto Justice is driven by the conviction that justice is not a privilege but a fundamental right. Through advocacy, education, support, and collaboration, we remain committed to building a society where all individuals can fully exercise their rights and participate equally in the systems that govern them.

1. Executive Summary

Children across Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, Ukraine, and Türkiye are experiencing a historic collapse of protection mechanisms guaranteed under international law. Conflicts, political repression, deliberate deprivation of essential services, and structural discrimination have created widespread violations that threaten the very survival and future of millions of children.

These violations include killing and maiming, forced displacement, starvation, denial of humanitarian aid, forced recruitment, sexual violence, and arbitrary detention. Some of these acts may amount to war crimes or crimes against humanity under the Geneva Conventions and the Rome Statute. This report consolidates evidence-based findings, provides legal analysis, and outlines urgent recommendations for UN bodies, states, and humanitarian actors.



2. Introduction

Across multiple regions, children are facing unprecedented threats to their lives, dignity, and development. Armed conflicts in Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, and Ukraine continue to devastate civilian infrastructure and social systems, while political repression in Türkiye adds a different but equally concerning dimension of state-inflicted harm. These crises collectively reflect a generational emergency in which millions of children are growing up in environments characterized by instability, traumatic violence, and systematic deprivation.

Despite repeated warnings by UN agencies, humanitarian organizations, and civil society, violations continue with near-total impunity. This report examines the patterns of abuse, contextual dynamics, and legal implications of grave violations affecting children, with the aim of supporting accountability efforts and guiding urgent international action.

3. Children in Armed Conflicts

3.1 Sudan

Sudan is currently facing one of the largest child protection crises in the world. The ongoing civil war has displaced more than four million children, while nearly 19 million have lost access to education. Entire health and education systems have collapsed.



Humanitarian agencies warn of catastrophic levels of food insecurity. Hundreds of thousands of children suffer from severe acute malnutrition, and many face starvation due to blockade tactics and the deliberate obstruction of humanitarian assistance.

Children are routinely exposed to bombardment, raids, abduction, and forced recruitment by armed groups. Documented attacks on hospitals and schools constitute clear violations of international humanitarian law.

3.2 Yemen

Yemen remains one of the most protracted humanitarian emergencies globally. More than 11 million children depend on humanitarian assistance. Malnutrition rates remain among the highest in the world, with millions of children acutely malnourished.

Children continue to be killed or maimed by airstrikes, landmines, and unexploded ordnance. Armed groups recruit children into combat, intelligence, and support roles. Access to water, sanitation, and education has sharply declined due to widespread infrastructure destruction.

3.3 Gaza

Children in Gaza face conditions that humanitarian agencies describe as catastrophic. Thousands have been killed, and over one million have experienced repeated displacement. A near-total collapse of essential services—including healthcare, water systems, and sanitation—has created an environment in which preventable diseases, hunger, and trauma are widespread.

Children suffer from extreme psychological distress due to constant exposure to bombardment, loss of family members, and extended displacement. Humanitarian access is severely restricted.



3.4 Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has led to the displacement of more than four million children internally and across Europe. Thousands have been separated from their families, and many have been forcibly transferred from occupied territories. More than 3,000 schools have been damaged or destroyed.

Regular missile and drone strikes continue to kill and injure children, while exposure to violence, trauma, and long-term instability disrupts their education and development.

4. Children Deprived of Liberty

4.1 Türkiye

Although not in active armed conflict, Türkiye has seen a disturbing rise in politically motivated prosecutions involving children and their families. Children have been detained on allegations related to the political activities of their parents or communities. Some infants and young children are imprisoned alongside their mothers.

Human Rights Watch and other organizations report that pregnant women and mothers of infants have been detained under broadly interpreted anti-terrorism laws. Children whose parents are accused of political offenses face denial of services, passport confiscations, and psychological intimidation.

Conditions of detention do not meet the standards required under the Convention on the Rights of the Child or the UN Bangkok Rules.

5. Legal Framework

This report relies primarily on:

- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), especially Articles 2, 3, 6, 9, 19, 24, 28, 31, 32, 37, and 38.
- International Humanitarian Law, including the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols.
- Relevant UN Security Council resolutions on Children and Armed Conflict (1261, 1314, 1379, 1460, 1539, 1612, 1998).

These frameworks obligate states and non-state actors to protect children, ensure access to humanitarian aid, prohibit starvation as a method of warfare, and prevent arbitrary detention and ill-treatment.

6. Recommendations

- Establish UN monitoring missions in all affected regions to document and verify grave violations against children.
- Demand immediate ceasefires and secure humanitarian corridors to ensure food, medical supplies, and civilian evacuation.
- Ensure accountability by referring violations to international mechanisms, including the ICC where applicable.
- Increase funding for child protection programs, mental health services, and emergency education.
- Urge Türkiye to release detained children and mothers held under politically motivated charges and to reform its child justice system in line with international standards.

7. Conclusion

Children across Sudan, Yemen, Gaza, Ukraine, and Türkiye are living through a generational emergency defined by systematic rights violations, profound trauma, and the collapse of essential protection systems. The scale and intensity of harm inflicted on children are not isolated consequences of conflict—they reflect deliberate patterns of conduct by state and non-state actors who have ignored or actively undermined their obligations under international law.

Across the conflict-affected regions, children are increasingly targeted rather than merely caught in crossfire. They face indiscriminate bombardments, starvation used as a method of warfare, the destruction of schools and hospitals, and the constant threat of displacement or death. The dismantling of education systems, the breakdown of healthcare networks, and restrictions on humanitarian aid have created conditions in which children are deprived not only of their rights but of the possibility of a stable future.

In Türkiye, the situation demonstrates how political repression can also produce grave child-rights violations outside of an armed conflict. The detention of children, infants living in prisons with their mothers, and the punitive measures taken against families accused of political dissent illustrate how state policies can also erode the protections guaranteed under **the Convention on the Rights of the Child**.

The long-term consequences of these crises cannot be overstated. Millions of children are growing up with sustained trauma, disrupted learning, loss of family structures, and exposure to extreme violence. These experiences will shape their psychological, social, and economic development for decades. A generation raised in such conditions risks future instability, prolonged cycles of conflict, and weakened societal cohesion.

The international community stands at a critical juncture. Inaction or delayed responses will allow these violations to deepen and will condemn an entire generation to a future marked by suffering, marginalization, and unrealized potential. The UN, states, and humanitarian actors must mobilize urgently, using all available diplomatic, legal, and humanitarian tools to halt violations, restore protection mechanisms, and ensure accountability.

Protecting children is not optional—it is a binding legal, moral, and humanitarian imperative. Failing to act now will not only betray millions of children but will also jeopardize prospects for peace, justice, and stability across multiple regions for generations to come.

8. Footnotes

1. UNICEF (2024). Global Humanitarian Overview – Sudan.
2. OCHA Yemen Humanitarian Response Plan (2025).
3. UNICEF Gaza Emergency Update (2024–2025).
4. UNHCR Ukraine Child Displacement Report (2024).
5. Human Rights Watch – Türkiye's Political Prosecutions (2023–2024).