

ETMUN

Unraveling the Domino Effect



Committee: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

Topic: Emergency Relief for Children in Gaza: Safeguarding Children
Amidst Devastating Bombing Attacks

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Letter from the President:

Dear Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) committee for ETMUN! It is with immense pleasure to be the president of a crucial committee that discusses the ongoing global challenges regarding children. I am Mustafa AlBakri, and I will be the President for this year's committee.

In this year's conference, we will be diving deeper into two topics. The first topic is "Safeguarding Afghan Children's Rights and Ensuring Sanitation Access." Afghanistan has been plagued by decades of conflict and instability, leaving millions of children vulnerable and deprived of their fundamental rights. The recent political and humanitarian crisis has further exacerbated the situation, with children facing increased threats to their well-being, including malnutrition, preventable diseases, and a lack of access to essential services. Delegates will discuss these issues, engage in strong debates, and produce crucial solutions for this topic.

The second topic is "Emergency Relief for Children in Gaza: Safeguarding Children Amidst Devastating Bombing Attacks." This topic is the most important in the ongoing issues of the world today. Gaza is a prison for over 2 million people, and over 40% are children! The continuous bombings have killed thousands of children, their families, their friends, and destroyed their future completely. What is the next step for this situation? What is the world going to do to solve this problem? Will the world stay silent, or will this issue be solved anytime soon? The delegates will be discussing the serious concerns that face the children in Gaza from trauma to lack of food, loss of families, homes, and severe injuries taken.

Delegates, I am so excited to meet you all and cannot wait for this conference and for these topics to be tackled. I hope you prepare well for them and wish you an amazing day!

Mustafa

Introduction/ overview:

The Gaza Strip, a narrow coastal enclave between Palestine and Egypt, has endured decades of conflict and hardship. Over two million Palestinians call Gaza home, nearly half of whom are children under the age of 18. This densely populated territory has been subjected to repeated cycles of violence, with devastating consequences for its inhabitants, particularly the most vulnerable among them: **children**.

The roots of Gaza's plight lie in the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, which resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, many of whom sought refuge in Gaza. This influx of refugees, coupled with natural population growth, transformed Gaza into one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

For decades, Gaza has been trapped in a cycle of conflict and deprivation. Israel's blockade of Gaza, imposed in 2007, has severely restricted the movement of people and goods, exacerbating the territory's economic and humanitarian crisis. This blockade has had a profound impact on Gaza's children, limiting their access to education, healthcare, and basic necessities.

The recurring cycles of violence between Israel and Hamas, the de facto ruling authority in Gaza, have further compounded the suffering of Gaza's children. These conflicts have resulted in widespread destruction, loss of life, and displacement, leaving countless children traumatized and vulnerable.

The latest escalation of violence, which began in October 2023, has brought the plight of Gazan children to the forefront. The Israeli military's airstrikes and artillery bombardments have caused widespread destruction and loss of life, with children disproportionately affected. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) estimates that over 4,000 Palestinian children have been killed since the escalation began.

In addition to the immediate physical trauma of violence, Gazan children face a multitude of psychological challenges. They live in constant fear of renewed violence, and many bear the scars of past conflicts. The blockade and economic hardship have also taken a toll on their mental health, leading to increased rates of anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Despite the immense challenges they face, Gazan children display remarkable resilience. They are eager to learn and grow, and they dream of a future free from conflict and violence. The international community has a responsibility to protect these children and provide them with the support they need to build a brighter future.

Key Terms:

- **Child protection:** The ongoing violence in Gaza has put children at grave risk, and UNICEF is working to protect them from harm. This includes providing safe spaces for children, reuniting children with their families, and addressing the psychosocial impact of conflict on children.
- **Humanitarian assistance:** UNICEF is working to provide children in Gaza with the essential services they need to survive, including food, water, shelter, healthcare, and education. The organization is also working to prevent the spread of disease and address the nutritional needs of children.
- **Resilience-building:** UNICEF is working to help children in Gaza develop the resilience they need to cope with the ongoing conflict. This includes providing psychosocial support, promoting positive coping mechanisms, and helping children to build skills for the future.
- **Advocacy:** UNICEF is advocating for the rights of children in Gaza, calling for an immediate ceasefire and an end to the violence. The organization is also working to raise awareness of the plight of children in Gaza and to mobilize support for the humanitarian response.
- **Partnership:** UNICEF is working with a wide range of partners, including other humanitarian organizations, the Palestinian government, and local communities, to deliver emergency relief and to protect children in Gaza.
- **Safe spaces for children:** UNICEF have established safe spaces where children can go to play, learn, and receive psychosocial support. These spaces provide a much-needed respite from the violence and help children to cope with the trauma they have experienced.
- **Child reunification:** UNICEF is working to reunite children who have been separated from their families as a result of the conflict. The organization has a database of missing children and is working with families to locate their loved ones.

- **Psychosocial support:** UNICEF is providing psychosocial support to children who have been affected by the conflict. This includes counseling, group therapy, and play-based activities.
- **Nutritional support:** UNICEF is working to prevent malnutrition among children in Gaza. The organization provides food supplements and teaches families about healthy eating practices.

Major Parties involved:

The issue of safeguarding children amidst devastating bombing attacks involves a complex interplay of various parties, each with distinct roles and responsibilities. Here's a brief overview of the major players:

- **Children and their Families:** At the heart of the issue are the children and their families, who bear the brunt of the violence and displacement caused by bombing attacks. They are the most vulnerable group and require immediate protection, humanitarian assistance, and psychosocial support.
- **Armed Groups and Government Forces:** The armed groups engaged in the conflict, as well as government forces, have a direct responsibility to adhere to international humanitarian law and protect civilians, including children. They must refrain from targeting civilian areas and take all feasible measures to minimize the impact of the conflict on children.
- **Media and Civil Society Organizations:** The media has a responsibility to report accurately and impartially on the situation, giving voice to the affected children and their families. Civil society organizations play a vital role in raising awareness, advocating for child rights, and mobilizing support for humanitarian efforts.
- **United Nations and Humanitarian Organizations:** The United Nations, particularly its agencies like UNICEF and UNRWA, plays a role in coordinating humanitarian assistance, advocating for child protection, and monitoring the situation on the ground. Humanitarian organizations, such as Save the Children, CARE International, and Médecins Sans Frontières, provide essential services to affected children and their families.

- **International Community and Diplomatic Actors:** The international community, including individual countries and diplomatic bodies, has a responsibility to use its influence to promote a ceasefire, facilitate humanitarian access, and ensure accountability for violations of international law. Diplomatic actors can play a crucial role in mediating negotiations and promoting a peaceful resolution to the conflict.
- **Local Communities and Leaders:** Local communities and their leaders play a critical role in providing support, protection, and a sense of normalcy to affected children. They can also serve as intermediaries between children and humanitarian organizations.

Timeline:

1951:

May 15: UNICEF begins its work in Gaza, aiding children affected by the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

1967:

June 5-10: UNICEF responds to the Six-Day War by providing emergency assistance to children in Gaza.

1987:

September 21-23: UNICEF launches its Child Alert initiative to draw attention to the plight of children affected by armed conflict in Gaza.

2000:

September 29-October 2: UNICEF condemns the Israeli bombing of Gaza, which kills hundreds of civilians, including many children.

2002:

July 16-18: UNICEF launches its Children in Armed Conflict campaign to raise awareness of the impact of armed conflict on children in Gaza.

2008:

April 23: UNICEF opens a new office in Gaza to expand its work on behalf of children.

2014:

July 8-August 26: UNICEF launches its No Lost Generation campaign to call for action to protect children affected by the 2014 Gaza War.

2018:

November 13-15: UNICEF condemns the Israeli bombing of Gaza, which kills dozens of children.

2021:

May 10-June 25: UNICEF scales up its efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to children in Gaza following the 2021 Israeli offensive.

2023:

January 1-October 13: UNICEF continues to provide humanitarian assistance to children in Gaza, working to protect them from violence and to support their education, healthcare, and psychosocial well-being.

Possible Solutions:

Strengthen the implementation of international humanitarian law and child protection mechanisms: This includes ensuring that all parties to armed conflict comply with their obligations under international law, including the Geneva Conventions and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. It also includes strengthening the capacity of child protection actors to monitor and document violations of child rights, and to provide assistance to children affected by armed conflict.

Invest in education and psychosocial support for children affected by armed conflict:

Education and psychosocial support are essential for helping children to cope with the trauma of violence and to rebuild their lives. This includes providing access to quality education, as well as mental health and psychosocial support services.

Promote dialogue and reconciliation: Dialogue and reconciliation are essential for creating a lasting peace in Gaza. This includes supporting initiatives that bring together Israelis and Palestinians to build understanding and trust, and to work towards a common future.

Support the work of organizations like UNICEF: UNICEF and other organizations are working on the ground in Gaza to provide humanitarian assistance to children and families affected by conflict. Supporting their work is essential for ensuring that children have access to the support they need.

Advocate for peace and nonviolence: We can all advocate for peace and nonviolence by raising awareness of the issue of children affected by armed conflict, and by supporting organizations that are working to end violence.

Guiding Questions:

- What specific forms of violence do children in Gaza face?
- What are the challenges faced by UNICEF in providing humanitarian assistance to children in Gaza?
- What role can technology play in safeguarding children in Gaza?
- What can UNICEF do to empower children in Gaza to become agents of change?
- How can UNICEF effectively communicate the needs of children in Gaza to the international community?
- What role can UNICEF play in promoting a culture of peace and nonviolence in Gaza?
- How can UNICEF measure the impact of its work on children in Gaza?

Resources:

- UNICEF Gaza: Protecting children in the midst of violence and conflict:
<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/children-gaza-need-lifesaving-support>
- UNICEF: Children in Gaza amidst devastating bombing attacks in Gaza:
<https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/children-conflict-urgent-help-needed>
- UNICEF: No Lost Generation: Protecting Children in the Gaza Conflict:
<https://www.unicef.org/mena/reports/unicef-state-palestine-year-end-situation-report>
- UNICEF: Gaza Emergency: Children Facing a Devastating Crisis:
<https://www.unicef.org/emergencies/children-gaza-need-lifesaving-support>
- Human Rights Watch: Israel/Palestine: Israel's Unlawful Strikes on Gaza and the Need for Accountable Investigations: <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/north-africa/israel/palestine>
- Middle East Eye: Gaza: The Blockade's Hidden Cost: <https://mezan.org/en/post/41721/In-Children%E2%80%99s-Eyes%3Cbr%3EChildren-and-War:-Stories-from-Gaza-children-in-summer-2014%E2%80%8E>
- Middle East Eye: Gaza: A Generation of Children Growing Up in War:
<https://www.middleeasteye.net/video/gazas-children-live-continuous-trauma-israeli-attacks>
- Middle East Eye: Gaza: How the Blockade Affects Food Security:
<https://www.arabbarometer.org/report/food-insecurity-and-its-discontents-in-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/>
- Al Jazeera: <https://www.aljazeera.com/tag/gaza/>